

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE WORD "PHILISTINE"

THE SATIRE OF THE PHILISTINE AND PHILISTINISM IN  
GERMAN LITERATURE FROM STURM UND DRANG TO HEINE

by

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## CHAPTER ONE.

### THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE WORD "PHILISTINE".

"Philistinism! We have not the expression in English. "Perhaps we have not the word because we have so much of the "thing--- Efforts have been made to obtain in English some "term equivalent to Philister--- Mr Carlyle has made several "such efforts: 'respectability with its thousand gigs', he "says; well, the occupant of every one of these gigs is, Mr "Carlyle means, a Philistine. However the word respectable "is far too valuable a word to be thus perverted from its "proper meaning; --- I think we had much better take the word "Philistine itself." So wrote Matthew Arnold in 1863,<sup>1</sup> apparently unaware of the fact that the expression had actually been used by English writers since 1802. Employed first as a translation from the German and subsequently as an independent term, "Philistine" was universally acknowledged as borrowed from the German, for no better word could be found to describe "the bores, dullards, Children of Darkness".<sup>2</sup> Carlyle was the first British author of note to adopt it in his literary vocabulary and with Matthew Arnold, is responsible for placing the word on a firm footing in England in the middle of the last century.<sup>3</sup>

The introduction of the expression "Philistine" into

1. *Essays Literary and Critical*. (Everyman) 1906.

2. Carlyle. 1872. *Sterling* 1. vii, 41.

3. C. T. Carr. *The German Influence on the English Vocabulary*. p. 58.

English is therefore of comparatively recent date; to trace its origin in German however we must go further afield and turn back as far as the seventeenth century.

The German language of the latter half of the seventeenth century was particularly rich in biblical quotations, and the mass of the people, not only theologians, would frequently find occasion to draw a comparison with Samson and the Philistines. We may assume with Friedrich Kluge<sup>1</sup> that such a comparison represents the first stage in the history of our word. It familiarised the people with the biblical story, presumably emphasised contempt for the Philistines and led to the idealisation of Samson. The Philistines have indeed since very early times been condemned for their cultural backwardness and destructive spirit.

In the late sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth, "Philistine" was frequently used to denote the enemies of the word of God, while Samson was the champion of truth. At this time universities were at their zenith, a special stress was laid upon the importance of academic study, and students had a particularly exalted idea of their own importance. After the Renaissance the people had come to be divided into two distinct classes, the learned and the vulgar, intellectual matters being the monopoly of the former, who

1. *Wortforschung und Wortgeschichte* p. 58.

despised those lacking the advantages of education, and speaking no Latin. The stress now laid on the application of the intellect to matters religious, Luther's insistence on the pure doctrine, the logical and scientific interpretation of the Bible, and the importance assigned to the preaching of sermons, necessitated a more careful training of students, especially of those destined for the pulpit. The growth in the learning of the new clergy tended to widen the gulf between the learned and the vulgar, whose ignorance and distrust of those better mentally equipped than themselves waxed accordingly. Devotion to the cause of learning naturally enhanced the standing of the universities. Students in general, but especially theologians, regarded themselves as the chosen people and so it happened that those outside the university circle came to be associated with the Philistines, more especially so in the case of the soldiers of the town, the students' particular enemies.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the chief opponent of the undergraduate had been the craftsman, but as the influence of the guilds declined under economic pressure in the seventeenth century, the town-guard seems to have inherited the students' hatred. The frequent clashes between Town and Gown, due largely to the increased lawlessness and lack of discipline in the universities, caused an unparalleled



amount of rioting and disturbance and many a pitched battle was fought in the street with fatal results. Moral depravity was widespread in Germany at the time but particularly in the younger academic circles. Many wealthy young men went up to the university for little else than amusement, leading wanton lives and indulging in rowdiness, rioting and licence as forms of excitement.

"Pennalism", an intensified form of "fagging", did much to foster the indiscipline. "Freshmen" were compelled to join the "Landmannschaft" or association of students from their own part of the country, and to act as servants to their elder compatriots. The increasing disorder and confusion in Germany caused by the Thirty Years' War favoured the growth of Pennalism, for there was no authority strong enough to crush it, and the more it developed, the worse forms did it take. Young students were made to suffer physical ill-treatment from their elders, to whose expenses of living they sometimes had to contribute. Goaded on by an iniquitous institution like Pennalism, which was not effectively crushed till the end of the seventeenth century, the insubordination and rebelliousness of students grew apace. It would often happen that the guard had to be called in to settle the differences between the unruly students and the citizens, who although not always free from blame, usually had the support

of the soldiers. On this account the soldiers aroused the hatred of the undergraduates and earned the nickname of Philistine. In spite of the turmoil in student ranks a certain "Gemeinsinn", a corporate spirit had developed and undergraduates as a class presented a united front when opposing any other class. They had a strong sense of academic freedom and resented any insult to their dignity as students.

Another factor contributing to the use of the expression "Philistine" for the Town-guard, in which tall men would naturally predominate, was the custom, established by the end of the seventeenth century, to dub those above the average height Philistines by ~~way of~~ association with Goliath. An example of the use of the term in this sense is found as early as 1672 in Johann Prætorius' "Satyrus Etymologicus": "Ist der Mann lang, so heisst man ihn einen Philister", and it is still so used by Claudius in 1775.<sup>1</sup> Philistine came in time to be a synonym for soldier among the students. There are numerous examples of this use of the word from 1687 onwards in Jena, Leipzig, Vienna, all University towns. In "Der lustige Philosophus" (1715), it is stated as a well known fact that students of Jena call the soldiers Philistines and the term is still so used for the guard in Maler Müllers "Faust" (1778).

So far as student language is concerned the expression

<sup>1</sup> M. Claudius. Rheinweinlied.

Philistine had therefore taken root by the end of the seventeenth century before the occurrence in Jena of the famous incident, to which for so long the origin of the word was erroneously attributed.

In 1689 a Jena undergraduate, one Weitz by name, is said to have been killed in a brawl by a citizen in league with the town-guard. The Superintendent Götze's text for the funeral oration was "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson", a favourite theme for sermons of the time. The students immediately identified their dead companion with Samson, and the term Philistine, hitherto restricted to the soldiers, acquired a wider meaning and was applied to the townsmen as well. Although the authenticity of this story is nowhere vouched for and it is difficult to determine how much is really true, there would definitely seem to be some truth in it and in a description of the town of Jena in 1785 the great-grandson of the Superintendent attributes the growth of the word to that funeral oration. According to Professor Schmeitzel in the "Wöchentliche Hallische Anzeigen" of 1746, on the night of the funeral the streets of Jena rang with the cries of "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson", and from that moment the term was generally applied by students to citizens as well as soldiers.

Most scholars agree that Jena is the birthplace of the more

comprehensive use of the expression and the end of the seventeenth century the time of its introduction into student language with the extended meaning of Townsman as opposed to Student. It is however a mistake to imagine that this incident gave rise to the use of the word in the first place. As we have seen, the term in its narrower sense was already established in student language before this particular clash in Jena. The incident was not the source of the word but merely a turning point in its history. The term soon spread from Jena to other towns and was everywhere adopted in student language.

It came to be applied to anyone who was not a student. Regarding themselves as a class apart, students were very conscious of their academic dignity and readily accepted a term aptly suited to differentiate them from those who did not enjoy their privileges. "Hier heisst man die Bürger Philister", states Reinwald in his history of University life in 1720. The Leipziger Spectateur of 1723 relates how the graduates of a university dub their non-graduate fellow-citizens Philistines, and adds: "Wer wollte wie die Philister leben?" Philistine became a general term for the tradesmen of the town, particularly for those housing students. Lenz uses the word in this sense in his "Hofmeister" of 1774: "Es ist ein guter, ehrlicher Philister bei dem ich wohne".



The jobber of horses and carriages to students is also called Philistine in Juncker's poems of 1726 and the expression was sometimes even applied to the horse itself as in Zacharias' "Renommist".<sup>1</sup> Gunther in his Lebensbeschreibung applies it to a creditor pressing for settlement of his debt. The use also spread to inanimate things, the dregs of the beer glass and the ashes in the pipe, and Adelung mentions in his dictionary of 1777 that Philistine was the Suabian coopers' term for a hoop, though the connection is not clear.

As one would expect in the German language, compound words soon appeared. Stoppe uses the term freely in compound form in his student poems of 1728. "Pferdephilister" is a horse jobber, "Bierphilister" the landlord of an inn, "Geldphilister" a usurer, "Reimphilister" a poetaster and "Taktphilister" a musician. Later "Stallphilister" is used as an alternative to "Pferdephilister", the only compound that seems to have enjoyed general popularity and was still employed by such writers as Goethe<sup>2</sup> and Kotzebue.<sup>3</sup>

Contempt for the Philistines was more and more emphasised as time went on for the student scorned all those who were not members of a university, the tradesmen and landlords of the town. Class distinctions were very marked in the early eighteenth century, birth and wealth counting for much more in academic life than is the case nowadays. Noblemen enjoyed

1. J.F.W. Zachariae. *Der Renommist*. 1744.

2. *Briefe* XIV, 304. 19th Sept. 1797.

" XIII, 321. 27th Nov. 1798 (Philisterpferd)

3. *Dram Sp.* 3, 240, quoted by *Lyrium*. (Philisterpferd)



various privileges denied to ordinary students; they were allowed to wear a plumed hat and dined at professors' tables instead of with ordinary landlords. Many of the wealthier middle-class students aped the nobles and shared their privileges, but the poorer students, sons of the clergy and professional men, could not afford to keep pace with them. Yet in spite of the social distinctions within the university, student class-consciousness as a whole affected rich and poor alike. Students were united in despising the "Bürger", and even the poorer men considered themselves aristocrats among non-academic townsmen, and regulated their behaviour accordingly. As students they claimed a warrant to assert superiority over those not academically trained. Laukhard narrates in his "Leben und Schicksale"<sup>1</sup> how spendthrift students, after running up heavy bills, gloried in annoying the Philistines by leaving their debts unsettled. A student only approached a Philistine when he wanted to borrow money or if he was attracted by a pleasing wife or a pretty daughter. In Jena though Philistines and students might forgather in an inn, their friendship was only for the "Kneipe", not for outside. The students of Strassburg treated the Philistines like dirt and demanded from them great respect and even obsequious bows. In Halle the Philistines intent on aping the students spent most of the day drinking beer and wasted

<sup>1</sup> 1791-1802.

all their substance. In his Lebensbeschreibung (1706) Hazard tells of "Burse, die einen Philister (so nennen sie uns Bürger) wie einen Floh achten"! Zacharias' Renommist was a "born enemy" of the Philistines, never trusted them and despised them with true student arrogance. This universal contempt accounts for the fact that when the expression passed into general usage some years later, it never shed its association with disdain and scorn which characterised it when its use was still a student monopoly.

The word has lived on in student language in its old sense of "non-student" up to the present day. From 1735 on there are innumerable examples in autograph books and student songs in which the Philistine is depicted as the declared foe of the undergraduate, to be deceived and cheated at every turn. "Bursch und Philister sind wie Gott und Teufel Geschwister."<sup>1</sup> "Pereant Philistri"<sup>2</sup> is to be found in a version of Gaudeamus about 1770.

Philistine came in turn to distinguish the graduate of a University from his younger brethren and the certificate received on graduation was called "Philisterschein". Students were loath to bid farewell to their carefree university life: "Ich labe mich lieber am Wein und am Kuss  
Bevor ich hinunter ins traurige Reich der Philisterwelt muss."<sup>3</sup> They themselves are now doomed to become Philistines.

1. Keil. Deutsche Stammböcher p. 325

2. " " " p. 155

3. Allgemeines deutsches Konversationslexikon p. 200.

"Zur alten Heimat geh ich ein,  
Muss selber nun Philister sein." <sup>1</sup>

Nowadays "Philister" is commonly used, especially in South Germany and the Baltic provinces, for the "alter Herr", the former-student member of a students' club. After a number of years in the club, usually on graduation, he becomes a member of the "Philisterium" and ceases to be an active club-member.

It was not likely that students would long retain the exclusive use of a word so pregnant with significance as Philistine, and we soon find it spreading to other circles, always connoting the idea of contempt and no longer confined to any particular class. It is not surprising that it soon became popular as a term of abuse for opponents. "Was weiss ich von dem ungläubigen Philister"? Voss exclaims in his poem at Leibniz' grave. Hamann frequently applied the term to his literary enemies, as for instance in a letter to Herder: "Mein ganzer Einfall durch Einschluss als Ihr Liebhaber zu schreiben war eine blosse Chicane um mich an den Philistern rächen zu können." <sup>2</sup>

And so the expression gradually found its way into the literary language, in time losing completely its original biblical and student flavour. It was however in the circle of the young Storm and Stress writers of Strassburg, themselves

1. Kommerbuch p 152.

2. Werke I, 21. Jan. 1773.

students or young graduates, under the influence of Herder and Goethe, that it first came to be used in the intellectual and moral sense with which we are familiar to-day.

(For bibliography see pp. 154 f.)

## CHAPTER TWO.

### SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND LITERARY THEORY.

Eighteenth century Germany was not one large united country but a collection of small states economically and politically backward. The country as a whole was mainly agricultural but farming methods were primitive and inefficient. There was no sound currency, the roads were bad, the conveyance of letters and merchandise was slow, and customs duties were levied by each petty state through which the goods passed. The towns in most parts of the country were few and far between and usually very small, many of them almost unchanged in size since the Middle Ages. Industry was still to a great extent controlled by the mediaeval guilds whose restrictions hampered free development. The townsmen were governed by tradition, and in the absence of any urge for progress, society was static.

Each of the small principalities was self-centred and jealous of its neighbour and all aped the methods and aims of the larger European states. Each was governed by its prince and engrossed in its own affairs. Absolute autocracy was the aim of the rulers, but the "benevolent despotism" of such men as Frederick the Great was not practised everywhere. The role of first servant of the state had no appeal to many of the



princes to whom personal advantage mattered more than the general welfare of the people. Although the ruler was aided by the army and Civil Service in his government, his will alone counted and there was in practice no appeal against his decision. The bureaucracy controlled every feature of the subject's life, his private affairs, his religion and manner of living, his food and clothing. The Landtage or representative Estates of the nobility and townspeople had in most states fallen into abeyance since the Thirty Years' War and as a consequence there was no representative institution to ventilate the wishes of the people and keep the prince in check.

The princes were careful to surround themselves with pomp and splendour to maintain their dignity and frequently won the affection and respect of their subjects. Beyond this there was no vestige of patriotism, no conception of Germany as a whole, no national pride, no sense of the responsibility which a share in the government imports. Little public spirit could be expected of the people as they were not called upon to co-operate in facing problems of state and solving national difficulties. For the average German the fatherland was his individual state and other parts of Germany were to him foreign. His outlook could hardly be other than provincial since there was no nation to inspire public-mindedness, no

general culture, no national tradition. Nor was there a dignified capital reflecting cosmopolitan influences and open to new ideas, to set a certain standard to the country. Travel was slow and expensive and still not unattended by risks, and means of communication were bad. The lack of contact with the courts or outside influences of the average craftsman, shopkeeper and small merchant rendered them slow to change, conservative in outlook and conventional in behaviour. In their lives there was no call for new ideas or breadth of vision; everything favoured a narrow and provincial habit of mind and the utmost subservience to authority. Their uneventful world unmoved by the spirit of progress offered little scope for enthusiasm and none for adventure. In their social relations they were governed by tradition and convention, but their virtue was often timidity and they upheld the established moral code because they were afraid to think and feel for themselves.

It is not surprising therefore that the outcome of this soul-destroying environment was materialism, self-interest, hypocrisy, narrowness, a lack of energy and virility, with little outlet for the enthusiasm of youth.

Social distinctions were still very marked. The nobility enjoyed social and legal privileges denied to the Bürger, the courts were exclusive and their doors closed to the middle

class. The aristocracy was held in high esteem by the bourgeoisie, who aped it in many ways, and while rendering due subservience to the unprincipled nobles, were in turn overbearing and arrogant to those they regarded as their inferiors,

The development of trade and commerce in some few favoured centres and especially the rise of brain workers, officials and professional men, brought into being a new and independent middle class which gradually gained social distinction and esteem. Men with a higher school and university education were coming into their own, and a legal training opened up the path to a career as an official in the service of some state or town. Men of this type became in a very real sense the leaders of culture and were on the whole better versed in the arts than the aristocracy. The scholars and professional men as well as the richer merchants considered themselves vastly superior to the ordinary shopkeepers and craftsmen. With their gradual emancipation they approached nearer to the nobility and even at times managed to secure for themselves some of the legal privileges enjoyed by the nobles. There were therefore considerable differences in the culture, standard of living, wealth and social position of the various sections of the middle class. The better educated formed a new class somewhere between the aristocracy and the lower middle class and partook of certain characteristics of both.

They kept for the most part the moral and ethical ideals of the Bürger but copied the nobility in matters of dress, manners, speech and so forth. They had learned to value culture and refinement, and personal worth and education meant more to them than noble birth because they owed their rise in the social scale to their intellect. They aimed at forming "an aristocracy of intellect and feeling," which they ranked as high as the aristocracy of birth.

The educated Bürger were in touch with the European movement of thought; they took a lively interest in the arts and sciences and public affairs and were inclined to despise those who did not. Although they had no patriotism in the modern sense, they strove for national originality and were anxious to create an independent German literature and acquire some prestige for German scholarship and thought, though it was a long time before they could dispense with French and English models. They were intensely proud of their culture, which as they considered constituted "Deutsche Grösse" and alone gave the Germans some standing. They held that German greatness was not political but cultural. As Schiller wrote in 1797; "Sie ist eine sittliche Grösse, sie wohnt in der Kultur und im Charakter der Nation, der von ihren politischen Schicksalen unabhängig ist--- Indem das politische Reich wankt, hat sich das geistige immer fester und vollkommener

gebildet."<sup>1</sup> Culture became the shibboleth of the educated Bürger as they naturally stressed the importance of the one thing they could be proud of, and this largely accounts for their contempt - which would in other circumstances seem excessive - for the unlettered members of the middle class. They considered themselves a class apart and were most anxious to be differentiated from those they so despised. But in criticising the Bürger as "Philister" they were in great measure criticising themselves, as man is ever inclined to attack most strongly that which he secretly fears. "Philistine" summarised all that they did not wish to be but also much of what they were or dreaded becoming. In their anxiety to display their superiority to their uneducated fellow-Bürger they frequently laid bare their own weaknesses - a fact of which they were sometimes aware.

In the nature of things it was inevitable that a time should come for the younger educated Bürger to revolt against the narrow confines of the world into which they had been born and in which there was little outlet for their energy and enthusiasm. Inspired by the writings of Rousseau, the Storm and Stress poets blamed civilisation for all social evils and not least for the misery caused by the conflict between the natural free-will of man and the claims of society. They rejected the established conventions in the name of

<sup>1</sup> Schiller, *Deutsche Lyrik*, Fragment.



freedom, nature, genius and personality. They maintained that man had been robbed of his original freedom and individuality and become a mere unit in the social system, condemned to the monotony of a regular profession. Of middle class birth themselves, they denounced the injustice of the existing order of things which invested the aristocracy with privileges denied to them. Natural impulse, a direct expression of the divinity of human nature, should not be repressed by man-made laws and conventions.

The Aufklärer had sacrificed feeling on the altar of reason, but Storm and Stress insist that man is to be guided not by his intellect but by his heart, for feeling is better than reason. Not afraid of the consequences of passion, the young poets urged mankind to follow instinct and experience the pleasures and sorrows of life to the full, "und dieses enge Dasein hier zur Ewigkeit erweitern".

In their attempt to escape from reality they took refuge in an imaginary world where their ideals were realised. In the works of Shakespeare and ancient Greece and the world of their own creation, they found real men, "Kraftnaturen", whose powerful personalities stood out in bold relief against the effeminate creatures of their own generation.

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Nature, not confined to imitations and translations, but an instinctive revelation of thought and experience. The numerous pedants of the time were absorbed in copying the French and Greek classics and had little vitality or knowledge of human nature. The masses were satisfied with third-rate literature written with a moral purpose and had no craving for originality, no idea of the mission of the poet and the symbolic beauty of poetry. Storm and Stress insisted that poetry calls for neither education nor scholarship but abundant experience of life, for the world is a living organism, a symbol of divinity, the one true source of inspiration for literature. The creative power of genius and originality is a divine gift to the poet, who in turn can give nothing greater than his own soul: "Genius is a master workman, learning but an instrument--" "the book of Nature and that of man--- are the fountain head "whence the-- streams of original composition flow," as Young had written in his essay on Original Composition.<sup>1</sup>

The revolt of Storm and Stress is mainly theoretical and confined to literature; the heroes of the plays expound at excessive length the poets' ideas and criticisms of society. Although the impossibility of returning to Nature in the manner proposed was soon realised, the Storm and Stress movement had a lasting effect on German literature, giving it new youth, life, strength, and establishing the idea that poetry must be

<sup>1</sup> *Conjectures on Original Composition* 1759. pp 13, 36.

"Erlebnisdichtung", an individual expression of life and Nature. The stress laid on this is an interesting indication of the lack of contact between writer and public. Readers did not wish the author to express the ideals of a community, but his own personal experiences, his joys and sorrows. German literature as a whole is essentially individualistic, the product of lonely men and small circles of friends and not, like French literature, of a society. The poet was not expected to help to shape the life of the community as he had done in the days of court poetry, of the Minnesang or French classicism, when art was the product of a society with common thoughts and aims. This again was a result of German particularism. Apart from the fact that the government was in the hands of the princes and did not permit of writers influencing its policy, there was no great capital demanding amusements for its court, no stimulating social intercourse. Life was uneventful and provided nothing sufficiently entertaining to be the subject of literature, so much importance was attached to individual thought and originality. Schiller emphasised the fact that literary individuality was one of the great benefits springing from Kleinstaaterei: "Keine Hauptstadt und kein Hof übte eine Tyrannei über den deutschen Geschmack aus. Paris. London. So viele Länder und Ströme und Sitten, so viele eigene Triebe und Arten."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deutsche Lyrik op. cit.

At a later stage of their development the more gifted of the Storm and Stress poets, taught by wider experience of life, abandoned the blind glorification of instinct and advocated a reasoned self-control, refinement, culture, a moral effort, in a word "classical" restraint. The purer and nobler aspect of human nature must overcome the animal tendencies in man, who should not give way to selfish passion but strive for inner perfection, "reine Menschlichkeit", "sittliche Humanität." The Storm and Stress desire for life and experience at any cost is succeeded by devotion to duty, industry, activity. In short the ideal of the Classics, as we shall see later, is the good citizen in the most exalted sense of the term, one whose highest aim is the performance of his duty for the good of mankind and the furtherance of "Humanität".

It is hardly surprising that to the Romantics who followed after the French Revolution, the Classics seemed somewhat bourgeois. The mechanical regularity of middle class life was more than ever abhorrent to the new generation of poets. Less at home in the world than even the Stürmer und Dränger, they longed for absolute freedom, symbolised by the "Sehnsucht nach der blauen Blume", a vague yearning to flee from everyday life to things eternal. The economic and political conditions had changed little and opportunity was still restricted. The



heroes of Romantic literature roam about the world at will, spurred on by a desire for adventure, unhampered by social duties. To the Romantics the classical ideal of Bürgertum was essentially unpoetic. Schiller was too rationalistic and moralistic, too much of an Aufklärer to have won their sympathy; his works were not sufficiently expressive of life and had little place for the wonderful and the unconscious. Goethe on the other hand was, especially in the early days, the idol of the Romantics, who were among the first to allot to him his full measure of admiration and an unchallenged place in German literature. Yet although they greatly admired his genius, the abundance of life and colour in his works, his wonderful power of making poetry live, some differences between him and the younger writers soon became apparent. The harmony and serene contentment of his later philosophy of life were estranging to those who were for ever hankering after the impossible and unattainable, and it appeared to them that Goethe was wanting in sympathy with the troubles of the Romantic poet. His Tasso for instance seemed to ignore the claims of genius and overestimate the value of the practical man. Even "Wilhelm Meister", at one time the Bible of the Romantics, was before long charged with placing reality before poetry. As a youth seeking poetry in life, Wilhelm is a great Romantic hero, but as the ideal Bürger he ceases to appeal to them. The

Romantics loved the wealth of life in the "Lehrjahre", but the realism, the lack of yearning for the infinite, the praise of a definite activity alienated them. Novalis for example in spite of his admiration for Goethe thought that here he had neglected Nature, symbolism and mysticism, and that as a consequence the novel was "thoroughly prosaic and unromantic", "eine poetisierte, bürgerliche und häusliche Geschichte---Aventuriers, Komödianten, Mätressen, Krämer und Philister sind die Bestandteile des Romans. Wer ihn recht zu Herzen nimmt, liest keinen Roman mehr."<sup>1</sup>

From Storm and Stress the Romantics inherited their love of freedom and originality, but they were more mature, less blind and impulsive. Although they also were essentially irrational, they valued "Vernunft" more than Storm and Stress and took to analysing their feelings. Their attack on Aufklärung was more intellectual, a matter of reason rather than instinct, and unlike Storm and Stress, their love for Nature urged them to explore her secrets. Warned by the terrors of the French Revolution, they were less adventurous in the political field and cherished the idea of a strong united country, for the Revolution, heralding a new epoch, had already fired the German interest in politics and fostered the cause of patriotism.

"Nach innen geht der geheimnisvolle Weg", man must seek to

<sup>1</sup> Novalis Werke III pp 292, 314.

know his own soul and develop his mind and personality. Like Storm and Stress, the Romantics were influenced by Herder's ideas of an organic whole and sought a union of Nature and art, of reason and the senses. They had an intense admiration for great personalities and sought out the individual features in ethics, life and art, maintaining the right of man to his individuality even when in conflict with society. This accounts for their scorn for the Philistines who have no personality, the "Dutzendmenschen" with nothing to distinguish them from one another.

Though the Romantics aim at "wholeness", they realise that absolute harmony is unattainable. Because harmony to them is a union of contrasts, they approach this ideal and avoid being one-sided by trying to be all things in turn. They go from one extreme to the other and love contrasts because they provide infinite variety. This idea of protean change becomes a principle with the Romantics and implies scorn for that which is static, for those consistent, steady-going, conventional citizens who are content to live in a rut.

The cult of the individual leads to the idea that man should have perfect freedom to develop his personality and not be hindered by law and convention. The will of man is all-powerful if it is allowed to assert itself. "Die Welt, sie war nicht eh' ich sie erschuf", so Goethe's Baccalaureus

parodies Fichte, whose "intellektuelle Anschauung" became for the Romantics a kind of magic which made it possible for man to have full control over his body as well as his mind and even be able to kill himself, like Kleist's Penthesilea, by merely wishing to die.

Romantic irony is another outcome of the freedom of the individual which makes all things possible. It illustrates the writer's power of rising above himself and destroying that which he created. The doctrine of solipsism leads to contempt for those who have no desire to develop their personality and escape from convention, for Philistines who are perfectly content to live in a groove.

The Romantics long for the infinite because they are aware of the limitations of earthly life and hold that man was created for a higher purpose than mere material existence. They look beyond the surface of everything and seek out the mysteries and wonders of life, emphasising the unconscious and supernatural in ordinary things which to the average man seem simple and straightforward. The Philistine has no knowledge of the wonders that underlie reality and has a prosaic explanation at hand for all mysteries.

The poets' strivings to reach the infinite teach them that the human can be united with the divine only by the power of love and poetry. Therefore they have a passion for art,

and for men like Wackenroder it becomes a new religion. As poetry is "das absolut Reelle", the Romantics have an exceptionally high conception of the creative power of the artist. Not only for Hölderlin is the poet a priest with a divine mission in life. For Novalis too poets and lovers are favourites of the gods, privileged to unravel the great secrets of life unknown to the scientist. Modelled on Goethe, the poet Klingsohr appears as a priest and prophet, a medium between God and man. The more the Romantics become devoted to art, the more do they despise the insensitive Philistines who are blind to its beauty and significance.

The Romantics are also alive to the restrictions of earthly love. Their love becomes something metaphysical, a religion which unites human nature with eternity and alone can satisfy the divine unrest. The elevated nature of Romantic love accounts for their scorn for love unrelated to eternity, for Philistine domestic happiness. The Romantic longing for the infinite contrasts most strongly with the self-satisfied, material outlook of the Philistine, the creature of habit.

The Romantics shared the Storm and Stress impatience with the sham modesty and hypocrisy of Aufklärung. They evolved an idea of an organic morality to proceed from within the individual and not be enforced from without. Spiritual and physical love were to be blended and sundered from law and



convention. The new ideal remained mainly negative and consisted in rejecting the acknowledged conventions although the Romantics did not, like Heinse and some of the earlier poets, oppose all idea of marriage.

Inspired by the powerful personalities of such women as Caroline, the Romantics advocated the emancipation of women and insisted on the importance of their receiving a higher education, which would enable them to fulfil their mission in the new religion of love and put them intellectually on a par with men. Therefore a poem like Schiller's "Würde der Frauen" which relegates woman to the kitchen and nursery, aroused their scorn and they mocked the unimaginative, uneducated woman whose interest is confined to housewifery and who, to use Jean Paul's words, sees no more in the universe than a nursery or a dance hall.

Enthusiasm is yet another characteristic of Romanticism for it also is a means of overcoming the limitations of earthly life and approaching the infinite. Therefore as enthusiasm is a quality of youth, he who is really young in spirit can never be a Philistine, whereas a youth with no enthusiasm, "jung ohne Jugend" is the Philistine incorporate. The praise of enthusiasm and condemnation of the unenthusiastic as Philistines are a Leitmotiv of Romantic literature. The enthusiast as defined by Brentano is a student in the wider sense of

the word, one who is eager to seek the eternal and discover the mysteries of life--- the most extreme contrast to the Philistine.

Most remote from Storm and Stress were the North German poets and thinkers of early Romanticism who, possessing intellect and imagination in equal measure, seldom lost their heads when dealing with the unconscious and mysterious. The later Romantics were more unbalanced and the power of reason and intellect dwindled. Although the actual works of both schools are similar and the characteristic features of the Romantic nature and philosophy of life remained almost unchanged, the Younger Romantics did not agree with the older writers in every respect and revelled in detecting Philistine traits within their ranks. They stressed more than ever the power of feeling, and the scientific outlook of the Jena circle was regarded with disfavour by the dreamy poets of Heidelberg and the Younger Romantic School.

# CHAPTER THREE.

## STORM AND STRESS.

The campaign against Aufklärung which continued through three generations of poets and united them in a common cause originated with HAMANN, whose talent inspired the young writers of Storm and Stress. Espousing the cause of genius and the irrational forces against the ultra-rationalistic Aufklärer, he asserted that common-sense is not the highest criterion and held that faith should rank before reason: "Was man glaubt hat nicht nötig bewiesen zu werden." His "Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten"<sup>1</sup> contrast the man of genius and insight with the learned Sophists - representing the Aufklärer or Philistines - who wish to tear him from solitude and debase his talents by insisting on their application to matters practical. This contrast is echoed in Hamann's own life when the poet is compared with his prosaic friend Berens. Socrates, the wisest of all philosophers, knows himself to be ignorant. Unlike pedantic scholars he values at its true worth the power of inspiration, which penetrates where learning never can. Many a hidden truth is revealed not by logical deduction but by the heart and senses.

The idea of "Brotstudium" or a regular profession was abhorrent to Hamann for whom love of the arts was everything.

<sup>1</sup> 1759

His passion for freedom led him to renounce even marriage, for though faithful to the one woman he dreaded the formal knot which would divorce from his life the element of risk and adventure.

His appeal was for personality, individual thought and critical judgement. Received coldly and with scant approbation by many contemporaries, the "Magus im Norden" gave vent to his disgust with the intellectual poverty of his self-seeking associates, his contempt for "eine im Grunde verdorbene Autor- und Leserwelt."<sup>1</sup> He attributes their ignorance to the fact that they are so intent on criticising others that they overlook the necessity of adding to their own store of knowledge of life. Blind, inert and unimaginative, they have learned only the technique of penmanship and are unaware of the power of genius.

In spite of his life-long struggle against Aufklärer, in whom we have no difficulty in recognising the precursors of the Philistines, Hamann did not avail himself of the term Philistine in his literary works. He did, however, pave the way to its more general adoption by comparatively frequently using it as a term of abuse in his letters. Writing to Herder in October 1772<sup>2</sup> he rails against the Philistines who have reduced his salary and some months later he dubs his literary opponents Philistines,<sup>3</sup> so presumably the word had by this time

1. *Schriftsteller und Kunstrichter*, 1762.

2. *Werke* II, 18. 6th Oct. 1772.

3. " II, 21. Jan. 1773

found its way into his vocabulary of everyday conversation. It is no wonder then that Herder, who was indebted to Hamann for so many inspirations, soon came to follow his master's lead in using a word with which he himself must have been familiar from his undergraduate days.

Young Goethe and Herder and their satellites at Strassburg were primarily responsible for familiarising the modern use of the term. "Philistine" came to signify the narrow bourgeois, lacking insight and wanting in appreciation of all the finer things of life, the very antithesis of Storm and Stress ideals. It is not merely a coincidence that "Philistine" should now find its place in everyday language; it might quite conceivably have long remained exclusively a student phrase had it not been for the young poets who, when still undergraduates, found this forceful epithet eminently suited to signify the bourgeois they all despised.

Goethe's letters of 1771 disclose three uses of the term. Writing in the autumn to Herder, he says it might have been not unpleasant for his friend to have known him and his strange views on life even earlier. "Dem sei nun wie ihm sei. Apostel oder Philister! ich bleib für Sie was ich war."<sup>1</sup> He is on sure ground for full well he knows that he is no Philistine, and that Herder, however severely critical he might be, could not so grossly misjudge him. Philistine denotes here a man

<sup>1</sup> Briefe II, 5.



without a mission as opposed to "Apostle", the ideal of Storm and Stress.

In another letter to Herder at the end of the same year,<sup>1</sup> Goethe relates how he has been reading Hamann's Socrates, which contrasts the heroic philosopher with the Philistines surrounding him, unsympathetic and pharisaical. Goethe and his friends feel themselves in some ways akin with Socrates by reason of the misunderstanding with which they also are received by contemporary Philistines.

In jesting verses to Merck about this time, Goethe declares open war on Philistines, carping critics and their kind,<sup>2</sup> and writing to Kestner in 1772<sup>3</sup> he again alludes in scathing terms to Philistines' smug criticisms. Goethe's relentless campaign against the Philistines had opened in earnest, revealing the genius' utter disgust of pettiness in its manifold and diverse forms.

These early examples however are all gleaned from correspondence, the literature of these years disclosing no use of the term. This would seem to indicate that although the expression had by now become fashionable in the speech of the younger generation at Strassburg, it had not as yet reached the literary language. Naturally a word but newly admitted to oral use would not at once be adopted in the more conservative language of literature.

1 Briefe II, 11.

2. " II, 10. Dec. 1771.

3 " II, 31. 10th Oct. 1772.

In Herder's Fables of 1773 we find what appear to be the two earliest literary allusions to the Philistine in its new sense.<sup>1</sup> The first fable tells of an ambitious student who plans a wonderful future but eventually becomes a mere sexton or a Philistine, just as a mouse which begins by seeking the sun to wife finds contentment in the end with an ordinary mouse. As these verses contrast Philistine with student, the older meaning is perhaps still predominant. In the other fable however the term seems to convey a more general meaning when applied to a monk who cannot read a Hebrew book he finds in the monastery.

We are indebted to Goethe's WERTHER (1774) for the first important use of the term Philistine in its moral and intellectual sense. In his letter of the 26th May, Werther describes the happy hour he spent sketching two peasant children in the shade of a lime tree. This episode determined him to devote himself to Nature who alone moulds the great artist. He admits that there is much to be said in praise of law and order and bourgeois society. A man who lives according to rote or formula may never produce anything very bad, nor is he likely to become an intolerable neighbour or a notorious criminal, but on the other hand, a plethora of rules will eventually destroy in him the real feeling of Nature and prevent its true expression. Werther now draws the famous contrast which gave

1. Werke I, 346, 337.

the new expression to Europe generally. A youth spends all his time with the girl he loves, and all his money on making her presents. Then along comes a Philistine, "ein Mann im öffentlichen Amt", who advises the youth to make a wise division of his time, allotting certain hours to work and only his leisure to his maiden. He must keep his financial position in view, and, credit permitting, make her an occasional present, on her birthday for instance. Were the lover to follow the Philistine's advice, he might become a useful member of society, but it would be an end to his love, and were he an artist, an end likewise to his art.

The Philistine is incapable of true love. What passes for love in his case is something quite superficial, it does not suffuse his very being. Love and life with him are not identical but separate entities. Of him it may well be said that love is of his life "a thing apart", a pleasure which he indulges when he has nothing more pressing to occupy him. His mania for order leads him to regulate even love, which turns to habit; and present-giving also is rationalised and restricted to specific occasions.

Although there is no other mention of the Philistine by name, the novel suggests throughout the misery Werther suffers from the Philistinism of society. Philistines try everything by their own standard of morality. Like Albert, they have

no understanding for passion. With the smug satisfaction of the Pharisee they watch a drunkard or a madman without being moved to pity. They have no eye for greatness, no appreciation of the intrinsic worth of life, of the things that really matter. For them all that counts is position, wealth, material prosperity. The pettiness of the ambassador, the Amtmann's failure to realise that there can be an exception to even the best of rules, the prince's lack of personality and superficial approach to art, the officials' blind devotion to regulations for their own sake, unrelated to life or circumstances - these are all Philistine traits, characteristic of the society of the time, a phase against which the Storm and Stress writers with their love of life and freedom felt bound to rise up in rebellion.

By reason of the novel's universal appeal, the mention of "Philistine" in Werther obviously did much to extend its use beyond university circles. But it was none the less a new expression and many authors and critics were not yet convinced that it was a literary word, so in spite of the example set by Goethe, references to the Philistine are comparatively rare in the literature of the next twenty years. Thus the fact that Goethe had availed himself of the term in Werther does not in the eyes of a critic who wrote in 1775 justify its use by the writer of "Etwas über die Leiden des jungen

Werthers und die Freuden des jungen Werthers": "Der Verfasser scheint aus allen Umständen und dem Ausdruck Philister ein noch sehr unkritisches Studentchen zu sein: vielleicht ist er einer von den seinwollenden Werthern, wovon wir oben gesprochen haben."<sup>1</sup> The author was censured for applying Philistine to the Aufklärer Fr. Nicolai, against whom Jung Stilling in the same year directed his "Schleuder eines Hirtenknaben gegen den hohnsprechenden Philister, den Verfasser des Sebaldus Nothanker" and who later enjoyed the reputation of being a model Philistine. For this critic "Philistine" was still a student expression unworthy of a place in literary criticism.

Written in the same year as Werther, Goethe's "Satyros" refers to the "steif Philister" who, barren of appreciation for the beauty of spring, would far prefer to see his crop safely stored in the barn than in its glorious stages of growth in the field, here again revealing the practical outlook.

Werther and Satyros furnish the only direct references to the Philistine in Goethe's early works, but in most of them we find satirical allusions to Philistine qualities.

The Philistinism of the Flemish people leads to the downfall of Egmont. "Philiströs ist das Bürgertum, das einen Egmont seinem platten Sicherheitsstreben opfert", writes Keferstein.<sup>2</sup> The fragment of the "Wandering Jew" condemns the

1. *Auserlesene Bibliothek der neuesten deutschen Literatur*. 1775  
Braun I, 156.
2. *Bürgertum und Bürgerlichkeit bei Goethe*. p. 47.



narrow mindedness and the lack of insight which blinds men to revelation. The "eternal Jew" is the eternal Philistine, the enemy of divine work and inspiration. The "Jahrmarktsfest zu Plundersweilern" denounces the prudery and hypocrisy of the Philistine moral code, henceforth a favourite subject of attack. Were Philistines compelled to listen to an ungarbled account of their own actual doings, they would profess to be horrified. The want of discernment of those for whom French classical drama is the one criterion of good taste and to whom imitation means more than originality is likewise touched upon. "Das Neueste von Plundersweilern" resumes the satire of the contemporary moral code with its arrogation of all the virtues, and scoffs at the Philistines who read voraciously but without discrimination.

Clavigo's fear of venturing on matrimony is subconsciously a dread of being drawn into the bonds of Philistinism. The conflict between love and ambition, bourgeois happiness and freedom, is a favourite Storm and Stress problem which occupied Goethe himself. His love of freedom led him to desert Friederike; his fear of Philistinism, of marriage and domesticity, forced him to flee from Lili and her circle of rich tradespeople.

Faust,<sup>1</sup> like Goethe himself, is disgusted with the Philistinism of his contemporaries, the arid pedantry of such

<sup>1</sup> *Ufaust* 1790  
*Faust part I* 1808

unnatural people as Wagner for whom books mean more than life and Nature. Yearning for the infinite and tired of the secluded life of a scholar, Faust longs to return to Nature and find a more vital occupation than is afforded by books alone. He discerns the inadequacy of learning derived from such a source and begins to dabble with magic in order to discover the mysteries of life and the great problems of humanity:

"Dass ich erkenne was die Welt  
Im innersten zusammenhält"

Overcome with Weltschmerz he cries:

"In jedem Kleide werd ich wohl die Pein  
Des engen Erdenlebens fühlen---  
Nur mit Entsetzen wach' ich morgens auf---  
Den Tag zu sehen, der mir in seinem Lauf  
Nicht Einen Wunsch erfüllen wird, nicht Einen,  
Der selbst die Ahnung jeder Lust  
Mit eigensinnigem Kritteln mindert,  
Die Schöpfung meiner regen Brust  
Mit tausend Lebensfratzen hindert"

What are these tormenting goblins if not Philistines who kill higher thought?

To experience human life to the full with all its lights and shadows is Faust's aim when making his wager with Mephistopheles. He has no fear of suffering but scorns Philistine stagnation and comfort. He realises the impossibility of ever finding satisfaction in a banal life of pleasure, illustrated in the scene "Vor dem Tor", where the unimaginative

Philistines, content with beer, tobacco, and pretty girls, have no concern for the welfare of mankind at large. It is then no wonder that amusements such as those offered to Faust in Auerbach's Keller fail to attract him.

Wagner, the "trockene Schleicher" is a typical example of the "Bildungsphilister", a term later popularised by Nietzsche to signify intellectual Philistines, who combine a narrow outlook and lack of insight with a certain ostensible culture. In spite of the fact that Wagner is imprinted in our memory as a ridiculous figure in dressing gown and night-cap, it cannot be denied that he is a keen student. But his fault lies in the fact that he has allowed learning to oust the claims of Nature and original thought; he is a mere pedant who soon tires of forests and fields but finds unending joy in books. His knowledge is superficial; the mysteries of life have no interest for him and he shares the Aufklärers' satisfaction with the state of science as he finds it, "und wie wirs denn zuletzt so herrlich weit gebracht." As Goethe said to Riemer in 1806:<sup>1</sup> "Es ist lächerlich wenn die Philister sich der grösseren Verständigkeit ihres Zeitalters rühmen und die früheren barbarisch nennen. Der Verstand ist so alt wie die Welt, auch das Kind hat Verstand." Applause is the breath of life to Wagner and all his studies are inspired not by a love of culture for its own sake but rather by the desire

1. 10th May.

for fame. He can imagine no greater bliss than universal admiration. He has ever an eye to profit and for the sake of benefiting from his master's company will mix with the crowd whom he would otherwise shun as coarse and illiterate.

MALER MÜLLER'S "Faust",<sup>1</sup> although employing "Philistine" only as a term for the town-guard, condemns the pettiness of those who cannot understand a scholar like Faust. Void of appreciation of literature and the fine arts, they value money above genius. The language used in a translation means more to them than the subject matter, they are concerned merely with face-values and do not strive to get to the heart of things.

Goethe's correspondence of this period gives interesting sidelights on his views of the Philistine. Writing in 1778 to Oeser from whom he had ordered a table, he says he has quite made up his mind how it is to be made, and jesting about his own love of detail, admits that it is as difficult to make something for him as for any Philistine, no matter how particular he be.<sup>2</sup> Later Goethe tells Merck of having sponsored a young man's tour through Germany; "und schränke mich nicht philisterhaft, wie die neuesten Kursachsen darauf ein, ob dieser oder jener Berg dem Herzog von Weimar gehört, oder

1. *Fausts Leben dramatisiert*. I. Teil, 1778.

2. *Briefe* III, 232. 15th June 1778

nicht"; a sarcastic reference to German Kleinstaaterie.

In a letter to Frau von Stein in 1777, Goethe describes the better side of Philistinism. As we shall see later he uses the word here as a synonym for Bürgertum. This praise of the simplicity of the patriarchal way of living which his experiences in Sesenheim had taught him to esteem, gives an earnest of his classical ideals. The "schöne Philisterei" in the house in Goslar where he is staying, is highly beneficial. He has regained his love for the sincerity of that class accounted low by men, but certainly most dear to God, and has learned to value its very limitations. "Da sind doch alle Tugenden beisammen. Beschränktheit, Genügsamkeit, grader Sinn, Treue, Freude über das leidlichste Gute, Harmlosigkeit, Dulden, Ausharren."<sup>2</sup>

In this connection it is interesting to note a fragment on Nature in the Tiefurter Journal of 1783. Though attributed to Tobler, it shows rather strongly the influence of Goethe: "Auch das Unnatürlichste ist Natur, auch die plumpste Philisterei hat etwas von ihrem Genie." Even the coarsest Philistinism has something of the genius of Nature. Tobler, a brother-in-law of Lavater, spent the summer of 1781 in Weimar and subsequently made use of the expression "Philistine" in letters to Knebel.<sup>3</sup>

Goethe's faithful disciple, J.M.R. LENZ, naturally favoured a word his friend had introduced into literature. The sensitive, highly-strung young poet suffered like Goethe

1. Briefe IV, 310. 11th Oct. 1780.

2. " III, 141. 4th Dec. 1777.

3. *Zur deutschen Literatur* I, 80, 85, 86. quoted by Kluge op.cit. p. 38



from the Philistines' lack of understanding and sympathy. His misgivings as to being understood are reflected in several of his plays. Nowhere, however, does he so directly inveigh against the Philistines as in his satire "Pandämonium Germanicum",<sup>1</sup> in which he depicts them as "öde Nachahmer des Lebens", devoid of creative genius and originality. Stemming as they do the course of genius, they are primarily responsible for the setback in culture. Lacking the enthusiasm from which genius flows, they prevent a restoration of the life-force, and are quite inappreciative of the intrinsic worth of a work of art. Analysis means more to them than essence and beauty, and the details of a poet's private life interest them more than his art. Their distorted desire for learning is a constant danger to the power of original composition. Instead of trying to develop their own talents, they become engrossed in empty speculations as to the greatness of others and are ever on the lookout for sensational items suitable for their newspaper articles, as art is to them no more than a trade. There are several bitter outbursts against such Bildungsphilister in the rest of Lenz' works, but his criticism is never again so explicit as in the Pandämonium.

In a fragment of a novel of 1775, entitled "Der Poet" Lenz writes: "Es ist das verdamnte Philistergeschmeiss mit ihrem Lob und Tadel, das mich so klein macht."<sup>2</sup> He can never

<sup>1</sup>. 1775

<sup>2</sup>. Goethe Jahrbuch, 1889. I, 62.

rid himself of the fear that his works might again be taken for Goethe's, as had already happened. Not that he thinks Goethe needs enriching: a glance at Götz or Werther makes Lenz blush for shame. It is the unwarranted interference of unsympathetic Philistines that embitters him. "Einsamkeit, Einsamkeit, du allein machst mich bekannt mit meinem besseren Selbst, und mein Dasein hört auf, ein Gericht zu sein."

Again in his "Soldaten" (1776) Lenz refers to the pettiness of Philistine existence, this time in contrast with the soldier's life of adventure. Carefree and irresponsible, the varied life of a soldier of the time must indeed have seemed glamorous and exciting when compared with the humdrum bourgeois existence.

The term Philistine is also used occasionally in letters written and received by Lenz.

In a letter to Herder in 1775, Lenz alludes to the uncomprehending Roman Philistines who were blind to the greatness of Coriolanus, again illustrating the idea that genius is condemned to suffer the cold misunderstanding of the outer world.<sup>1</sup> Writing to Lenz in 1776, Schlosser declares that a Philistine is not born but made, and that his early training is responsible for his character. Everyone is endowed with his share of those nerves which can be so tuned as never to lack response to spiritual vibration.<sup>2</sup> To blame Nature for Philistinism in

1. Briefe an und von Lenz I, 124. 28th Aug. 1775

2. " " " " " I, 162. 13th Jan. 1776.

mankind would not be in keeping with Storm and Stress belief in her infallibility. The Philistine, most unnatural of all phenomena, is the product of over-civilisation. Herder, in another letter to Lenz, mentions that he must preach trial sermons at Weimar after Easter; "Nicht für den Herzog, versteht sich, sondern für die Stadtphilister, und mich ahndets, ich komme nicht los. Da werde ich sie alle sehen."<sup>1</sup>

The underlying motive of Schiller's "RÄUBER"<sup>2</sup> is a hatred of the weakness and inhumanity of the "tintenklecksenden Säkulum" in which he lived, although he does not mention the Philistine by name. In the preface Schiller reveals his fear of being misunderstood by the "Pöbel", (the Philistines) who are "zu kurzsichtig, mein Ganzes auszureichen, zu kleingeistisch, mein Grosses zu begreifen, zu boshaft, mein Gutes wissen zu wollen."

The enterprising young robber Karl deplotes the feebleness and langour of this "schlappen Kastratenjahrhundert", which ruminates upon the deeds of old and descants upon heroes instead of imitating their heroism. "Das Gesetz hat zum Schneckengang verdorben, was Adlerflug geworden wäre." Law and conventionalism destroy original force in man and preclude courage and greatness. Karl condemns the sanctimonious Pharisees whose religion consists in attending church with

1. Briefe an und von Lenz I, 205. March 1776.

2. 1781.

vain, worldly thoughts in their hearts, who talk of charity and neighbourly love in one breath and curse in the next a blind old beggar from their door. Such men are mere "Falschmünzer der Wahrheit, Affen der Gottheit", with no power or love of humanity.

The hero of KLINGER'S drama "Die Falschen Spieler",<sup>1</sup> (in which the expression Philistine twice occurs) shares Karl Moor's disgust with the state of the world and the fetters of bourgeois society. When pursued by his relatives and the girl who loves him, and urged to abandon his wanton ways, he refuses to be led home by a girl, "die mich im Triumph in ihre Philisterzirkel führen wird." He prefers his lawless life of freedom and adventure to a monotonous married existence. When told by his friend that the moment has come to make his choice between Philistinism and untethered liberty, he protests he will never submit, but he eventually succumbs to persuasion and returns home subdued. The hero's scorn is directed not so much against particular Philistine traits of the bourgeois as against the cramping ties of all middle-class life, its cares and responsibilities, as compared with the exciting, untrammelled life enjoyed by a dishonest adventurer.

As the use of the word Philistine was still generally

confined to the spoken language, it is not surprising to find it in the personal correspondence of an older author like Wieland, who does not use it in his literary works. Wieland must have become familiar with the expression from Goethe's works and the speech of the young poets who had taken up their abode in Weimar. In 1776, Wieland informs Merck that Goethe and he both happen to be buying a garden, "dergestalt, dass wir beide, ohne vorgängige Abrede uns beinah in ein und demselben Augenblick in den Weimarer Philisterorden begeben haben,"<sup>1</sup> that is, they have become citizens of Weimar by buying land there. Writing to Frau Rat in 1777,<sup>2</sup> after the birth of his son, he says that Philistinism has overcome the spirit of the world in him. He is now settling down to family life and finds contentment in simple pleasures. Here again Philistinism is used synonymously with middle-class life, not necessarily in a derogatory sense. In a letter to Merck the following year, Wieland asks him to answer his questions as a tradesman would his customer, "Punkt für Punkt, so weise und philisternmässig als dir's Gott giebt."<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to note that by 1780 the Duke Karl August himself made use of the term in his correspondence. In one letter he refers to "Philisterbonhomie",<sup>4</sup> and in another to "der elenden Philisterei des Geschäftslebens", for which no man was ever intended.<sup>5</sup>

1. Briefe an und von Merck. p. 58. 25th March 1776.

2. Frau Rat. p. 93. 1st Dec. 1777.

3. Briefe an und von Merck. p. 139. 14th May 1778.

4. " " " " " p. 184. 31st May 1881.

5. Knebels Literarischer Nachlass I, 118. 17th July 1880.



An example of the use of "Philistine" in literary criticism of the period is furnished by Bürger in his "Nothgedrungene Nachrede" to the Göttinger Musenalmanach of 1782. When mocking those who wish to publish poetry without understanding grammar and prosody, he says even Philistines would be shocked at such attempts at verse. "Selbst ehrliche Philister, ob sie gleich nur durch die Schule gelaufen sind, würden die Hände über dem Kopfe zusammen schlagen, wenn ich von diesem Greuel, den sich gewiss niemand arg genug vorstellt, Proben vorlegen wollte." He does not give them credit for much artistic appreciation, but thinks even they would realise the atrocity of writing bad poetry.

The satire of the Philistines and Philistinism had then taken root in the seventies of the 18th century and gradually spread to wider circles, so that by the end of the decade Philistine was a current expression of everyday language. Although literary references are comparatively rare at this period, the path the Romantics were later to tread had been well paved by their predecessors.

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### THE CLASSICS.

There is a marked difference between the Goethe of Storm and Stress days and the author of Tasso and Wilhelm Meister. Goethe's activities as a leading official at the court of Weimer revealed to him the solid worth of bourgeois virtues, and social institutions, the advantages of law and order. From the rebellious, titanic outlook of his extreme youth he veers round to that well-regulated, moderate philosophy of life that distinguishes his later works.

His change of outlook is perhaps best exemplified in Tasso.<sup>1</sup> Here he does not observe life merely with the eye of a genius nor is he content with the ideal of the poet's living apart from the community; he condemns Tasso's lack of self-control and overweening occupation with himself, the activity of a practical man like Antonio earning his approbation.

After his outburst against contemporary society in "Die Räuber", Schiller too came to realise the value of the domestic virtues to which he gives due weight in his classical plays. In a phrase of Thomas Mann, "Schiller hat die bürgerliche Idee im politischen, demokratischen Sinne dargestellt, während Goethe sie im geistigen, kulturellen Sinne repräsentiert."<sup>2</sup>

"Dem Wirklichen eine poetische Gestalt zu geben" is the

1. 1790

2. Goethe als Repräsentant des bürgerlichen Zeitalters p. 29.

aim of the mature Goethe for whom the spirit of reality is the true ideal. The Classics unlike the Romantics do not yearn for the unattainable but find contentment in the performance of the ordinary daily tasks. "Was ist deine Pflicht? Die Forderung des Tages," or again, as Goethe says in Pandora: "Des echten Mannes wahre Feier ist die Tat." Faust too after all his manifold experiences comes in the end to be satisfied with the unselfish life of a Bürger intent on doing good to others.

At times there seems something verging on the Philistine about the "honnête homme" of the Classics, and the characters of the later works of Goethe and Schiller seem to bring into relief the value of the sound bourgeois qualities, while genius and inspiration are relegated to a much lower plane. But as Keferstein explains, there is a great difference between a truly ideal Bürger and a Philistine in the stricter sense of the word, who is in reality the degenerate form of the Bürger. "(Der Philister ist ein Mensch) in bürgerlicher Lebensform, der nicht um die Grenzen dieser Lebensform weiss, entweder derart, dass seine Persönlichkeit nicht ausreicht, die bürgerliche Lebensform wirklich auszufüllen, dass er sich also die Grenzen fälschlich zu eng zieht, oder derart, dass er die Grenzen der bürgerlichen Lebensform übersieht und die Bürgerlichkeit auch auf Tatbestände ausdehnt, die wesentlich unbürgerlich und

widerbürgerlich sind."<sup>1</sup> It is only when he fails to grasp the higher purpose of his own work, the intrinsic sense of human existence that the Bürger becomes a Philistine.

To attribute to Goethe approval of Philistinism would be making too free a use of the word. Only when "Philistine" is identified with "Bürger" can his views be so interpreted, but as the distinction between Bürger and Philister is never so marked in reality as in theory, this mistake often arises. When Edgar Steiger for instance in his essay on "Goethe als Philister"<sup>2</sup> tries to bring the poet "menschlich näher" by proving him a Philistine, he must really mean "Bürger". Goethe's respect for social institutions including the aristocracy is surely not Philistine snobbery but just another aspect of the Bürgertum of the age.

Goethe's praise of the Bürger does not in any way imply approval of the Philistine, whose pettiness and want of vitality and personality he ever despised. His attack on this degenerate form of the Bürgertum never abated, nor did he ever lose sight of the narrow boundary dividing Bürgertum and Philistertum. He realised fully how easily the one can merge into the other when the interests are allowed to become narrow and too much stress is laid upon material things with the result that the essential truths of human existence are ignored.

As Friedrich Kluge indicates,<sup>3</sup> Goethe is not always

1. Kefauver *op. cit.* p. 3.

2. See bibliography.

3. *op. cit.* p. 38





consistent in his use of the expression "Philistine" but seems at times to endeavour to ennoble it by emphasising its more exalted meaning when associated with the virtues of Bürgertum. Goethe brings out the worth of simplicity in his appreciation of the "schöne Philisterei" in Goslar in 1777.<sup>1</sup> He again uses Philister as a synonym for Bürger in his criticism of Grübler's poems in 1805, stressing all the good points and conveying no idea of anything despicable. Grübler "habe einen ausserordentlichen Vorsprung vor anderen seinesgleichen, dass er mit Bewusstsein ein Nürnberger Philister ist. Er steht wirklich in allen seinen Darstellungen und Äusserungen als ein unerreichbares Beispiel von Geradsinn, Menschenverstand, Scharfblick, Durchblick in seinem Kreise da, dass er demjenigen, der diese Eigenschaften zu schätzen weiss, Bewunderung ablockt. Keine Spur von Schiefheit, falscher Anforderung, dunkler Selbstgenügsamkeit, sondern alles klar, heiter und rein, wie ein Glas Wasser---- und so zeigt er sich in seinem Wesen als das, was er wirklich ist, als rechtlicher Bürger."<sup>2</sup> Goethe obviously does not mean this use of the word to be taken in a derogatory sense for he assigns to Grübler all the attributes of the ideal Bürger; it is used to stress the limitations of middle-class life, which Grübler rightly and willingly accepts. It is however exceptional for the poet to use the expression in this sense and his frequent references to it elsewhere all

1. See above p. 42.

2. Rezension in der *Jenaischen allgemeinen Literaturzeitung*.  
13th Feb. 1805. Jub. ausg. XXXVI, 244



connote the idea of disdain and scorn.

Lorentz<sup>1</sup> draws attention to characters like Wilhelm in the "Geschwister" and Hermann who at first sight seem Philistines but are actually only "Scheinphilister", in other words, Bürger. The poet's father too in spite of his pedantry, so typical of middle-class society of the time, has widespread interests and an understanding and love of art: there is "Manches Kleine an ihnen aber nichts Kleinliches" - all the difference between Bürger and Philister.

Goethe and Schiller themselves had many of the traits one associates with the Bürger, and their classical ideal is well reflected in their own characters. They were industrious, loyal, persevering, orderly, moderate, well-balanced, kind and just, full of commonsense and<sup>they</sup> had a strong sense of responsibility. But as the distinction between Bürger and Philister is seldom in real life very clear-cut, qualities which ennoble the one can easily be perverted in the other and lose their value. Goethe himself admits in a letter to Schiller that the average German finds it almost an impossibility to separate worth and efficiency from Philistinism, to combine industry with nobility, freedom and courage.

As Schiller declares in his "Aesthetische Erziehung des Menschen" (1795), true nobility of character can transform the most trivial action of everyday life into something eternal,

<sup>1</sup> Der Typus des Philisters bei Goethe.

but when a mercenary spirit permeates the world egoism becomes the driving force and the association with eternity is lost. The interest of the average man is confined to his own calling, on which he exhausts such scanty power as he may possess, for he has not imagination enough to broaden his outlook. True education must banish from civilisation such traces of degeneration and lead it to an ideal state where mercenary considerations are replaced by aesthetic appreciation.

Schiller's GLOCKE<sup>1</sup> and Goethe's HERMANN UND DOROTHEA<sup>2</sup> are perhaps the greatest idealisations in German literature of bourgeois society with its law and order and domestic virtues. Goethe and Schiller both appreciate what is good in the quiet contentment of the daily round.

"Heil dem Bürger des kleinen Städtchens,  
Welcher ländlich Gewerbe mit Bürgergewerbe paart."

They are full of praise for the "Ruhige Bürger, der sein väterlich Erbe mit stillen Schritten umgeht" and extol activity, industry and devotion to duty, "heilige Ordnung". Woman's true function is the fulfilment of her daily tasks in the home. "Die züchtige Hausfrau regt ohn' Ende die fleissigen Hände." How different from Caroline and the independent women of the early Romantics! Nothing is so elevating as work.

"Arbeit ist des Bürger's Zierde,  
Segen ist der Mühe Preis.  
Ehrt den König seine Würde,  
Ehret uns der Hände Fleiss."

1. Das Lied von der Glocke 1799.

2. 1797.

The Romantics are prone to see only the meaner side of the Kleinstädter and are often blind to the nobler aspects of provincial life. Goethe praises the virtues of simplicity but does not overlook the narrow boundary between Bürgertum and Philistinism and in the apothecary gives us a typical example of the provincial Philistine. The pettiness of the timid, conceited, old man shows up the inherent nobility of his neighbours. He is gossipy, superficial and selfish, with no concern for the rest of humanity as long as all is well with him. Hermann condemns his egoism and stresses the value of mutual help and responsibility. The apothecary's horizon extends no further than his own private existence, but there is an underlying sense in the regularity and order of the genuine Bürger's life, for it fills its own particular niche in the general scheme of things. Goethe denounces the Philistinism of those who regard their own experience as universal in a conversation with Riemer in 1807: "Man wird in philisterhaften Äusserungen immer finden, dass der Kerl immer zugleich seinen eigenen Zustand ausspricht, indem er den fremden negiert, und dass er also den seinigen als allgemein sein sollend verlangt. Es ist also der blindeste Egoismus, der von sich selbst nichts weiss, und nicht weiss, dass der der andern ebensoviel Recht hätte, den seinigen auszuschliessen, als der seinige hat, den andern." <sup>1</sup>

Writing to Jacobi in 1801 Goethe declares: "Ich erlaube jedem Erfahrungsmann---- gegen die Philosophie--- eine Art Apprehension,

<sup>1</sup> 18th Aug. 1807.

die aber nicht in Abneigung ausarten, sondern sich in eine stille, vorsichtige Neigung auflösen muss. Geschieht das nicht, so ist, ehe man sich's versieht, der Weg zur Philisterei betreten: auf dem ein guter Kopf sich nur desto schlimmer befindet, als er, auf eine ungeschickte Weise, die bessere Gesellschaft vermeidet, die ihm allein bei seinem Streben behilflich sein könnte."<sup>1</sup> The man who, relying exclusively on his limited experience, neglects the aid of philosophy in his search for the fundamental truths of human existence is a Philistine. For this reason Goethe declared that the French scientist Cuvier "doch nur ein Philister sei,"<sup>2</sup> eben weil ihm das vielverheissende, die Grenzen der Natur erweiternde Ahnen fremd und unzugänglich sei," as Lorentz points out. It is "die Weltauffassung des Philisters, wenn man gleich Cuvier aus dem Einzelnen in ein Ganzes geht, welches zwar vorausgesetzt, aber als nie erkennbar betrachtet wird."<sup>3</sup>

As Goethe passed on from the troubled times of Storm and Stress and reached a haven of peace and happiness in the sublime simplicity of his life in Weimar, so WILHELM MEISTER<sup>4</sup> passed through the testing fires of the Lehrjahre until he stood in the end, to use Schiller's words, "in einer schönen, menschlichen Mitte da, gleich weit von der Phantasterei und der Philisterhaftigkeit."<sup>5</sup> Wilhelm's aim in life is to develop and perfect himself. His disgust with the Philistinism of the

1. Briefe XV, 281. 23rd Nov. 1801.

2. Gespräch mit Müller. 7th May 1830.

3. Lorentz op. cit. p 499.

4. Lehrjahre 1795-96.

5. Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe, 180. 3rd July 1796.



surrounding world, the universal lack of vigour and enthusiasm, drives him to associate with the actors, whose bohemianism and spirit of adventure seem to him to contrast favourably with the staid monotony of middle-class life. The spontaneity and vitality of such natural unconventional creatures as Philine who follow the dictates of the heart rather than a stereotyped moral code appeal to Wilhelm, whereas he is repelled by the hypocrisy of those who, while condemning Mme. Melina, thank God that "dergleichen Fälle in ihrer Familie entweder nicht vorgekommen oder nicht bekannt geworden waren."

Enthusiastic young Wilhelm learned with dismay that even the romantic profession of the wandering players of the time can harbour Philistinism. Melina and his wife for example are what Keferstein calls "Pseudo-vagabunden". They are not genuinely bohemian for too many traces of their original Philistinism still cling to them. Circumstances have forced them into bohemian surroundings but they cannot change their inmost nature. They are in Gundolf's words: "Ohne jeden Schwung und ohne Seelenkraft, geborene Philisternaturen, die nur durch eine jugendliche Wallung, wie sie auch gewöhnlichen Geschöpfen widerfährt, aus der bürgerlichen Bahn in die Boheme geraten sind."<sup>1</sup> Melina has no inward relation to art for to him it is merely a means to a living, a trade which he has assumed only because he can find no better.

Werner, the counterpart of Wilhelm throughout the

<sup>1</sup> Goethe. p 357.



Lehrjahre, is the prototype of the Philistine. To increase his capital to the advantage of himself and his family is his chief aim in life. Not that he wants more money to enjoy the greater comfort it brings! On the contrary he has no regard for luxury nor indeed for anything that fails to produce more capital, and is satisfied with the bare necessities of life. "Nur nichts Überflüssiges im Hause; nur nicht zu viel Möbeln, Gerätschaften, nur keine Kutsche und Pferde. Nichts als Geld---- Es ist mir nichts unerträglicher als so ein alter Kram von Besitztum." Mere possession is not enough for him; he craves constant appreciation of his wealth. His greed for material gain leads him to look upon everything with an eye to profit. His friend Wilhelm is a "Gegenstand seiner Spekulation", his children even he regards as assets to be advantageously employed at the earliest possible time. Economy means more to him than comfortable living. If one is cramped for room inside the house there is plenty outside: coffee-houses and clubs for the men, walks and rides for the women, what more could be desired? He is certainly not far out in his estimate of his womenfolk whose interests are confined to dress and housekeeping. Werner has no use whatever for such unproductive hobbies as the collection of pictures; art leaves him unmoved. Yet he would never forgo his game of cards in the evening because he is

accustomed to it. There is no public spirit about Werner. His outlook is narrow and his interests are limited to himself and his family. He has never given a thought to the State; patriotism has no part in his life, nor have freedom or adventure. He has not the slightest understanding of Wilhelm's philosophy of life, the appeal of freedom and originality. He is the complete egoist without thought for the rest of mankind. "Das ist also mein lustiges Glaubensbekenntnis: seine Geschäfte verrichtet, Geld verschafft, sich mit den seinigen lustig gemacht und um die übrige Welt nicht mehr bekümmert, als insofern man sie nützen kann." As Schiller declares in a letter to Goethe: "Ein solcher Philister konnte allenfalls durch die Jugend und durch seinen Umgang mit Wilhelm eine Zeitlang emporgetragen werden: sobald diese zwei Engel von ihm weichen, fällt er wie recht und billig der Materie anheim, und muss endlich selber darüber erstaunen, wie weit er hinter seinen Freunden zurückgeblieben ist."<sup>1</sup>

Schiller's idealisation of the bourgeois virtues in his later works was not, as in Goethe's case, accompanied to any great extent by the satire of Philistinism. Only in his personal correspondence and a few epigrams does he give vent to his feelings about the Philistines. In his collaborations with Goethe however, in their joint writings for Schiller's *Musenalmanach* and the letters they exchanged at the end of the

<sup>1</sup> Briefwechsel. *op.cit.*, 180. 3rd July 1796

century, frequent reference is made to the Philistines. As Goethe had used the term though sparsely yet on and off for many years, it seems quite probable that Schiller was infected by his friend's use of it, this theory being supported by the fact that Schiller so seldom employed it when less directly in contact with Goethe. It should not be overlooked however that Schiller had alluded to the Philistine by name in letters written before the appearance of the *Xenien* which gave the expression such publicity, so it must have been included in at least his spoken vocabulary.

In a letter to Körner in 1788, Schiller relates how the Duchess Anna Amalia of Weimar had given him "einen ziemlich derben Auftrag an Wieland, der Spass sein sollte, aber es nicht war. Er sei ein altväterischer, platter Mensch, ein Philister."<sup>1</sup> Goethe mentions no such characteristics when he treats of Wieland in the *Freimaurerische Gedächtnisrede* (1813): "Er lehnt sich auf gegen alles, was wir unter dem Wort Philisterei zu begreifen gewohnt sind, gegen stockende Pedanterei, kleinstädtisches Wesen, kümmerliche äussere Sitte, beschränkte Kritik, falsche Sprödigkeit, platte Behaglichkeit, anmassliche Würde, und wie diese Ungeister, deren Namen Legion ist, nur alle zu bezeichnen sein mögen."

When A.W. Schlegel proposes translating Shakespeare, Schiller, writing to him in 1796, deploras the inadequacy of Eschenburg's translation and expresses his delight at the

1. Briefe II, 59. 7th May 1788.

prospect of being able to approach Shakespeare by a different channel than hitherto. "Mit diesem (Eschenburg) sind Sie glimpflicher umgegangen als er's bei seiner lächerlichen Anmassung als Kritiker und Aesthetiker verdient. Man sollte diese Erzphilister, die doch Menschen zu sein sich einbilden, nicht so gut traktieren. Käme es auf sie und ihre Hohlköpfe an, sie würden alles Genialische in Grundsboden zertreten und zerstören."<sup>1</sup> Arrogant, empty-headed writers like Eschenburg would destroy all genius, were it only in their power. It was then particularly unfortunate that such a man should ever have undertaken the translation of Shakespeare, a work surely calling for imagination and originality.

There has been much discussion about the introduction of the Philistine into the XENIEN, the polemic epigrams published jointly by Goethe and Schiller in the Musenalmanach of 1797. Fr. Kluge attributes the use of the word to Schiller,<sup>2</sup> his theory being based on the fact that the expression is found in Schiller's earliest extant version of the couplet which declares that the Xenien are intended to be foxes with burning tails who are chased "in die reife papierne Saat der Philister." In Schiller's own manuscript the lines run thus:

"Durch das Getreide liefen mit brennenden Schwänzen die Füchse,  
Feuer fing da die Saat und der Philister erschrack."

But obviously Goethe and Schiller were aiming at the same

1. Briefe IV, 427. 11th March 1796.

2. Kluge op. cit. pp 41 f.



target, so it is useless to conjecture as to who was originally responsible for the introduction of the word, when both poets expressly desired the *Xenien* to be considered a joint production. Does not Goethe himself in a conversation with Eckermann decry the Philistinism of those who try to distinguish between his distichs and Schiller's? "Als ob es darauf ankäme, als ob etwas damit gewonnen wäre, und als ob es nicht genug wäre, dass die Sachen da sind!"<sup>1</sup>

The *Xenien* are directed in particular against literary Philistines, the mass of third-rate scribblers who regard themselves as scholars and writers and yet do not understand the first elements of the art. Mediocrity in every branch of culture is scorned, in art, philosophy and more especially in literature. "Deutsch in Künsten gewöhnlich heisst mittel-mässig," and Goethe and Schiller determine to rid German literature of the stigma with which it had been not unfairly branded. They are quite prepared for opposition and would even welcome the censure of the Philistines, for this would establish the justice of their cause.

"Den Philister verdriesse, den Schwärmer necke, den Heuchler  
Quäle der fröhliche Vers, der nur das Gute verehrt,"

or again, when the Almanach of 1797 is compared with a bee-hive:

"Lieblichen Honig geb er dem Freund, doch naht sich täppisch  
Der Philister, ums Ohr saus ihm der stechende Schwarm!"

<sup>1</sup> Eckermann 16th Dec. 1828



The Philistine has no appreciation of the beauty of Nature. As in Satyros he is reproached with allowing material greed to interfere with the admiration of Nature. The poets ironically address the Philistines thus:

"Freut Euch des Schmetterlings nicht; der Bösewicht zeugt  
 Euch die Raupe,  
 Die Euch den herrlichen Kohl fast aus der Schlüssel verzehrt."

The banality of the Philistines' outlook on Nature is frequently scorned in Goethe's poems. In "Regen und Regenbogen" (1813) for instance, the Philistine admits that rain has a purpose, for it is refreshing and good for the crops, but he thinks the rainbow could easily be dispensed with, as it has no practical value. Frau Iris however assures him she is there "als Zeugnis einer besseren Welt,

Für Augen, die vom Erdenlauf  
 Getrost sich wenden zum Himmel auf  
 Und in der Dünste trübem Netz  
 Erkennen Gott und sein Gesetz.  
 Drum wähle du, ein andres Schwein,  
 Nur immer den Rüssel in den Boden hinein,  
 Und gönne dem verklärten Blick  
 An meiner Herrlichkeit sein Glück."

The Philistine is blind to the glory of the rainbow; he is incapable of interpreting the message it brings because he is too intent on earthly things.

The Philistine's standard of beauty is entirely false. It is distorted either by too close attention to material value or by the dictates of convention. Goethe complained once to Eckermann that Philistines set up absurd fashions

which disfigure and deform natural beauty of human beings and animals alike. "Ein Pferd, dem Schweif und Mähne abgeschnitten--- Über alles eine Jungfrau, deren Leib von Jugend auf durch Schnurbrüste verdorben und entstellt worden, alles diese sind Dinge, von denen sich der gute Geschmack abwendet und die bloss in dem Schönheitskatechismus der Philister ihre Stelle haben."<sup>1</sup>

A scathing criticism of the Xenien was only to be expected from Fr. Nicolai, one of the main objects of attack. He maintains that Goethe and Schiller summarily dismiss as Philistines all those who differ from them in matters literary and do not join in the throng of worshippers at their throne. "Vom Weihrauchsduft derselben umnebelt, bilden sie sich ein, sie allein wären etwas in der deutschen Literatur wert, und wenn sie etwa auch gnädigst erlaubten, auch etwas- freilich weniger als sie-wert zu sein. Alle andern sind ihnen Philister, Bediente, die ihnen, den Königen, die Stube fegen, Ochsen, Esel--- Über alle andere sich erhaben dünkend, glauben sie jedem mit Verachtung und Grobheit begegnen zu dürfen, so wie es ihnen einfällt."<sup>2</sup> In a similar tone Bertuch wrote to Böttiger some years later: "Da Goethe seinen Segen über alles sprach, kriegte ich einen Philister in die Jacke geworfen und schwieg."<sup>3</sup>

The VOTIVTAFELN, another collection of epigrams in the Almanach

1. Eckenmann 18th April 1827.

2. Anhang zu Schillers Musenalmanach für 1797. Braum II, 262

3. 24th Sept. 1810. Goethe Jahrbuch I, 154

of 1797, treat in particular affectation in learning and unintelligent prattling of art. The Philistine comes in for his fair share of derision, but he is considered at least less objectionable than the "Schöngeist":

"Jener mag gelten, er dient doch als fleissiger Knecht noch  
 der Wahrheit,  
 Aber dieser bestiehlt Wahrheit und Schönheit zugleich."

The Philistine does at any rate try to serve truth as he sees it and is an industrious worker though condemned to mediocrity.

The reason for the want of ideas and originality in so many writers of the day lies mainly in their incapacity of seeing Nature as a whole.

"Wart ihr, Philister, imstand die Natur im Grossen zu sehen,  
 Sicher führte sie selbst Euch zu Ideen empor."

Nature herself is an ever enriching source of inspiration but those whose meanness prevents their extracting her wealth remain barren.

"Philistine" is not reserved exclusively for those absolutely devoid of artistic feeling, but embraces scholars, like Wagner in Faust, whose learning lacks the quickening insight which alone imparts to it a deeper sense. Only those gifted with aesthetic perception reap the fruits of science, while the assiduous pedant toils away unrewarded. A couplet entitled "Der Philister" or "Der gelehrte Arbeiter" declares:

"Nimmer belohnt ihn des Baumes Frucht, den er mühsam erziehet;  
 Nur der Geschmack geniesst was die Gelehrsamkeit pflanzt."

Nor does the Philistine enjoy the favour of the Muses. His

fame dies with him, whereas the poet, beloved of the gods, is immortal.

"Mit dem Philister stirbt auch sein Ruhm. Du, himmlische Muse  
Trägst die dich lieben, die du liebst in Mnemosynens Schoss

In a discussion of the Votivtafeln in January 1797 in the Berliner Archiv der Zeit und ihres Geschmacks the critic says: "Unter den besonders durch die Tabulae Votivae neugeadelten Worten, haben wir das Wort Philister bemerkt, welches freilich zuweilen unentbehrlich scheint. Nun wird man z.B. forthin sagen können: 'Er ist der grösste Philister unter den Genies oder das grösste Genie unter den Philistern', ohne befürchten zu müssen, dass man einen niedrigen Ausdruck gebraucht habe." According to this critic then, Philistine was still looked upon as a new word before the publication of the Xenien and authors were chary about using it in case it still savoured of slang. The favour granted to the word by Goethe and Schiller apparently popularised it as a literary term, and was considered to have "ennobled" it to such an extent that it could henceforth be used without fear of the least reprehension. This view is supported by the fact that although "Philistine" became widely known after the publication of Goethe's Werther in 1774, there were found to be only isolated references to it in the literary works of Storm and Stress, even in those of Goethe, and the Xenien are the first individual work in which anything approaching frequent repetition of the term can be noted. Soon after



some pretension to sentiment or common-sense.

Schiller maintains however that a playful mood becomes tradespeople and Philistines more than men of the world.

"Es ist gewiss, dass dem Ästhetischen, so wenig es auch die Leerheit vertragen kann, die Frivolität weit weniger widerspricht als die Ernsthaftigkeit, und weil es dem Deutschen weit natürlicher ist, sich zu beschäftigen und zu bestimmen als sich in Freiheit zu setzen, so hat man bei ihm schon etwas Ästhetisches gewonnen, wenn man ihn nur von der Schwere des Stoffes befreit, denn seine Natur sorgt schon hinlänglich dafür, dass seine Freiheit nicht ganz ohne Kraft und Gehalt ist. Mir gefallen darum die Geschäftsleute und Philister überhaupt weit besser in einer solchen spielenden Stimmung, als die müssigen Weltleute, denn bei diesen bleibt das Spiel immer kraft- und gehaltleer."<sup>1</sup>

Both poets associate Philistinism with tradesmen and reveal their pronounced dislike for shopkeepers who do not confine themselves to their own sphere but obtrude into the world of poetry. Goethe, telling Schiller of a call he had received from a "poetical tradesman", says there was no sign of exertion, love or confidence in him: "Er stellte sich mir in dem philisterhaften Egoismus eines Ex-studenten dar."<sup>2</sup> Goethe could not persuade him to say anything of the least significance. Well-to-do tradespeople who have recourse to literature and poetry "haben und behalten eine eigene Tournüre,

1. Briefwechsel, 414. 2nd Feb. 1798.

2. " , 352. 9th Aug. 1797



ein gewisser Ernst und Innigkeit, ein gewisses Haften und Festhalten, ein lebhaft tätiges Bemühen: allein sie scheinen mir keiner Erhebung fähig, so wenig als des Begriffs, worauf es eigentlich ankommt." Without exaltation and insight the most persistent toil is unavailing. The comfort and security enjoyed by flourishing merchants is one of the primary causes of Philistinism, for which the rising middle-class of the time offered particularly fertile soil. Goethe alludes several times to the "Philisterhaftigkeit des Behagens,"<sup>1</sup> and it is this that his Faust forswears.

Goethe and Schiller still apply "Philistine" as a term of abuse to literary opponents, a habit they never dropped. Schiller refers, for example, to F.A. Wolf and his criticism of an essay of Herder's in these words: "Sie werden aber finden, dass nicht wohl etwas anders geschehen kann, als den Philister zu persiflieren,"<sup>2</sup> a phrase reminiscent of contemporary student songs.

When Goethe informs Schiller of the disfavour his scientific discoveries have encountered,<sup>3</sup> his friend replies that literary Philistines demand that authors should not diverge from the path of activity on which they start. If Goethe had published his optical discoveries under a pseudonym, they would have been accorded a very different reception by Philistines like the Stolbergs whose objection was not so much to the innovation itself as to its origin. Scientific research was, they considered, outside the province of a poet's activity:

1. Fragment. Note to *Richtung und Wahrheit* II, 10 B.

An Zelter. 3rd May 1816. *Briefe* XXVII, 6.

2. *Briefwechsel*, III, 2. 24th Oct. 1795.

3. " 121. 23rd Nov. 1795.

Goethe should confine himself to his own branch of learning.

In his poems, letters and conversations Goethe frequently gives vent to his feelings about literary Philistines. He makes a scathing hit in his poem "Gedichte", when he likens the Philistine in his attitude to poetry to the man who looks at the stained glass windows of a church from the outside only.

"Da ist alles dunkel und düster.  
Und so sieht's auch der Herr Philister." <sup>1</sup>

The Philistine cannot penetrate to the inner meaning of anything but sees only the exterior. Goethe once complained that: "unter den Philisterkritiken über die Wahlverwandtschaften auch die war, dass man keinen Kampf des Sittlichen mit der Neigung sehe," <sup>2</sup> the reason being that this conflict takes place behind the scenes and the Philistine's insight does not reach so far. It is therefore praise of no mean degree when Goethe says of any work that there is nothing Philistine about it, as he did for instance of the manuscript of *The Three Wise Men*: "Weder Pfafftum, noch Philisterei, noch Beschränktheit ist zu spüren." <sup>3</sup>

Goethe once told Meyer that Philistines wish to see the arts dominated by the moral law. "Und so schnurrt auch wieder die alte halbwahre Philisterleier: dass die Künste das Sittengesetz anerkennen und sich ihm unterordnen sollen." <sup>4</sup>

1. Parabolisch I, 1827.

2. Gespräch mit Riemer 6th and 10th Dec. 1809.

3. an Boisseree. Briefe ~~xxx~~, 78. 22nd Oct. 1819.

4. bei Riemer, 38. Quoted by Grimm (Wörterbuch)

Although it is quite fit and proper that the arts should recognise the moral law, the consequences would be fatal were they to submit to it"und es wäre besser, dass man ihnen gleich einen Mühlstein an den Hals hänge und sie ersäufte, als dass man sie nach und nach ins Nützlich-Platte absterben liesse."

Want of penetration and imagination is visible in the Philistine's attitude to Nature. In the poem entitled "Allerdings"<sup>1</sup> the term Philistine is applied to the scientist who does not realise that Nature has not an outward and an inward side but is one and undivided.

"Natur hat weder Kern noch Schale,  
Alles ist sie mit einem Male,"

but as Goethe hints to the Philistine himself:

"Dich prüfe du nur allermeist,  
Ob du Kern oder Schale seist."

The unpoetical, undiscerning scientist who tries to subject Nature to analysis is as much to blame as the ordinary Philistine who has no wish to study her.

"Philistine" is again applied to scientists when Goethe refers to his friend Lavater in the "Paralipomena zu den Annalen."<sup>2</sup> "Er wollte auf die Masse wirken, und so entgegnete ihm das Fratzenhafte der Masse fürchterlich. Er wäre ein Über-Hogarth gewesen, wenn er hätte so bilden können. Denn was ist Hogarth und alle Karikatur auf diesem Wege als der Triumph des Formlosen über die Form. Die Menschengestalt chemischen Philistergesetzen anheimgegeben, gärend und in

1. 1820.

2. 1801-03. *Jahrb. ausg.* ~~xxx~~, 346.

allen Graden verfaulend. Daher sein: 'Zum Fliehen'".

That Philistinism hinders the course of genius and originality is another favourite thought of Goethe's. As he once admitted to Müller: "So oft die Franzosen ihre Philisterei aufgeben und wo sie es tun, stehen sie weit über uns im kritischen Urteil und in der Auffassung origineller Geisteswerke."<sup>1</sup>

Goethe knows from personal experience how poets suffer from lack of appreciation and sympathy. The tragic fate of poets like Schiller, Hölderlin and Kleist is an outstanding feature of German literature. Hölderlin speaks of the tragedy of German poets in "Hyperion"<sup>2</sup>: "Voll Lieb' und Geist und Hoffnung wachsen seine Musenjünglinge dem deutschen Volk heran; du siehst sie sieben Jahre später, und sie wandern wie die Schatten, still und kalt, sind wie ein Boden, den der Feind mit Salz besäete, dass er nimmer einen Grashalm treibt," for they find no understanding, no response among the Germans, "Barbaren von alters her, durch Fleiss und Wissenschaft und selbst durch Religion barbarischer geworden, tiefunfähig jedes göttlichen Gefühls, verdorben bis ins Mark zum Glück der heiligen Grazien," a criticism all the more bitter because it is born of love for Germany and not of hate.

"Ein deutscher Schriftsteller, ein deutscher Märtyrer" Goethe says to Eckermann.<sup>3</sup> But it is no different in France or England, he maintains, and Byron for instance "wird durch die bösen Zungen aus England getrieben und würde zuletzt ans

1. 8th March 1824

2. 1797-99.

3. Eckermann 14th March 1830.



Ende der Welt geflohen sein, wenn ein früher Tod ihn nicht den Philistern und ihrem Hass enthoben hätte." Matthew Arnold concurs in this statement of Goethe's, asserting that Byron "shattered himself to pieces against the huge, black, cloud-topped, interminable precipice of British Philistinism."

The Philistines are too obstinate and their thoughts too fixed to allow of their formulating new ideas.

In the second part of Faust the Baccalaureus, feeling his individual importance as a scholar, speaks scathingly of "philisterhaft einklemmende Gedanken," and elsewhere Goethe says: "Unsere deutschen Philister beobachten nicht die Welt, beschäftigen sich vielmehr mit dem Wiederkäuen ihrer eigenen Ideen."<sup>2</sup> This accounts for their intellectual inactivity. They are so persistent in their ideas that they prefer their own judgements to those of experts on any subject. Yet Goethe seems at times to think that real genius can overcome even Philistinism. "Ergötzlich ist es zu sehen, wie ein Mann, in dem bürgerlichen Wesen selbst befangen, sich durch geniale Betrachtung darüber erhebt und dasjenige, was wir sonst als Philisterei, Bocksbeutel, Schlendrian und alberne Stockung zu verachten pflegen, in seiner natürlichen, anmutigen Notwendigkeit sehen lässt und uns solche beschränkte Zustände dulden, schätzen und lieben lernt."<sup>3</sup> Here again Goethe shows that respect for the virtues of middle-class life which, as we have seen, prompted him to praise Gröbler.

1. Essays op. cit. p. 125

2. Gespräch mit Soret. 17th Feb. 1832.

3. Introduction to "Der deutsche Egel Blas". Jub. ausg. XXXVII, 207.



Goethe constantly refers contemptuously to those who are slaves to routine and habit; "Nun sitzen sie hinter ihren Mauern eingefangen von ihren Gewohnheiten und Gesetzen, ihren Fraubasereien und Philistereien"<sup>1</sup>, he writes disdainfully on the Swiss journey.

Moral hypocrisy is a further characteristic of the Philistine. In his witty poem, "Generalbeichte"<sup>2</sup>, while accusing the Philistines of the faults he most abhors, Goethe ironically makes a confession of his sins.

"Still und maulfaul sassen wir  
Wenn Philister schwätzten  
Über göttlichen Gesang  
Ihr Geklatsche schätzten".

He sets up a programme of opposition to Philistinism which has for its aim:

"Uns vom halben zu entwöhnen,  
Und im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen  
Resolut zu leben;  
Den Philistern allzumal  
Wohlgemüt zu schnippen  
Jenen Perlenschaum des Weins  
Nicht nur flach zu nippen"-----,

whereas Philistine superficiality spoils all the good things of life.

The ZAHME XENIEN<sup>3</sup>, written by Goethe many years after the death of the friend with whom he wrote the first Xenien, were intended to be "tame" as compared with the polemic distichs of 1797. While more general in character and less personal than

1. Briefe aus der Schweiz. Abt. I. Weimar edition xix, 198.

2. Written 1802, published 1804.

3. 1820-27.

the Xenien, they resemble them in the attack on the Philistines.

"Was ist ein Philister?  
Ein hohler Darm,  
Von Furcht und Hoffnung ausgefüllt,  
Dass Gott erbarm."

The Philistine is hollow, but blown out with fear and hope, which Goethe in the second part of Faust declares to be among the greatest enemies of man. That fear and hope are particularly Philistine traits is often suggested by Goethe. He quotes these same verses in a letter to Zelter in 1831<sup>1</sup> when referring to the Berlin people's undue fear of cholera. On the occasion of the illness of his cherished daughter-in-law Ottilie, Goethe does not give way to fear: "Ich will nicht hoffen und fürchten wie ein gemeiner Philister,"<sup>2</sup> he says to Müller. In the Annalen (1806), Goethe refers to the "Interimshoffnungen, mit denen wir uns philisterhaft schon manche Jahre hingehalten,"<sup>3</sup> and the poem "Drohende Zeichen"<sup>4</sup> ridicules the Philistine's excessive fear and superstition.

"Der Philister springt zur Tür hinaus  
Der Stern steht über meinem Haus.  
O weh"!

In fear and trembling the Philistine describes to his neighbour all the evil omens that threaten the downfall of his house. The latter however maintains that there is more to be gained by the noble fulfilment of one's duty than by senseless fear. In the Wanderjahre, Goethe said: "Warum hofft der Mensch nur in die Nähe? Da muss er handeln und sich helfen: in die

1. 4th Sept. 1831
2. 3rd April. 1824.
3. Jub. ausg. ~~xxx~~, 189.
4. 1821.

Ferne soll er hoffen und Gott vertrauen."<sup>1</sup> It is useless to indulge in fear and hope about the small troubles of everyday life, where action is of more avail. In a phrase of Lorentz: "Von Furcht und Hoffnung bewegt zu werden in Fällen, wo die unabänderliche, gesetzmässige Verknüpfung von Wirkung und Ursache den Verlauf der Dinge bestimmt, erscheint Goethe philisterhaft."<sup>2</sup>

In the *Zahme Xenien* Goethe still makes use of the term Philistine for his literary enemies. He mocks the "Philister-pfaffen, Neiderbrut," who attack Wilhelm Meister, and also the ignorant people who support Pustkuchen Glanzow's edition of the *Wanderjahre* in preference to his own.

The poet alludes here also to the Philistinism of those who devote too much time to the reading of newspapers:

"Das Zeitungsgeschwister  
Wie mag sich's gestalten  
Als um die Philister  
Zum Narren zu halten"?

By reason of their support of the newspapers and the consequent encouragement of a low standard of writing, Philistines are responsible for the number of third-rate authors. In the *Wanderjahre*<sup>3</sup> too Goethe refers to the Philistinism of this occupation. "Lese er die Zeitungen wie jeder Philister,"<sup>4</sup> Jarno says. The Philistine is ever greedy for news and seeking sensations. His reading is more an indulgence of curiosity than the outcome of a desire for mental improvement.

1. quoted by Keferstein *op. cit.* p. 25.

2. Lorentz *op. cit.* p. 448.

3. Part I, 1821. Whole, 1829.

4. I, Chapter IV.

In Macarien's Archiv,<sup>1</sup> Goethe says, "Unser Anteil an öffentlichen Angelegenheiten ist meist nur Philisterei," for this same reason, and he repeats this thought in a letter to Zelter in 1830 when he tells his friend he has stopped reading newspapers: "Denn genau besehen ist es von Privatleuten doch nur eine Philisterei, wenn wir demjenigen zuviel Anteil schenken, was uns nicht angeht."<sup>2</sup>

In another of the *Zahme Xenien* not published till 1836 Goethe, revealing his realisation of the strength and import of his life-long war against the Philistines, claims the right to as many memorials as Blücher, for as the great soldier freed the Germans from the French yoke, he has liberated them from "Philisternetzen" and shown them the path to intellectual freedom and originality.<sup>3</sup> Yet in spite of his unceasing efforts in this direction, Goethe is not often so optimistic as regards the result of his campaign against Philistinism; it is indeed more usual for him to consider the disease almost incurable.

1. *Aus Maximen und Reflexionen*, 5. 1829.

2. 24th April 1830.

3. *Zahme Xenien* 5, 103.



## CHAPTER FIVE.

### WRITERS OF THE EARLY ROMANTIC PERIOD.

Although by the time TIECK came to the fore "Philistine" was well established in literature, he very seldom made use of it; yet his disgust with the Philistinism of contemporary society, the overrationalism and lack of imagination of Aufklärung is manifest everywhere. He maintained that the Aufklärer abused rationalism by merely suiting it to their own purposes. It was the "Scheinrationalismus", the ostensible display of reason, that moved him to anger, for the rationalism of the later Aufklärer was in effect largely superficial, and did not comprise a genuine effort to be guided by the light of reason.

Tieck's campaign against Aufklärung opens with the "Schildbürger" (1797). He had been working for some years for the publisher Nicolai, generally considered an Arch-philistine by all but his own supporters. Nicolai did not appreciate Tieck's efforts to revive folk-lore, nor did he sympathise with the Romantic interest in old literature. An old popular story from the "Lalenbuch", which tells of the foolish acts of the inhabitants of Schilda, served Tieck as a basis for his satire of Aufklärung and the small town. In his "Geschichte der Abderiten" some years before, Wieland had given a similar satire of the Kleinstädter of the time, disguised in Greek dress. Wieland's satire was perhaps of a more general character



than that of Tieck who mocked not so much the universal folly of mankind, as the shortcomings of the small town dwellers. The *Schildbürger* represent Nicolai and his friends, the overrational, practical, unimaginative Aufklärer, with their lack of appreciation of art, their borrowed philosophy and shallow moral code, content with the semblances of virtue. Tieck denounces the so-called toleration of Aufklärung, in essence a complete disregard for all religion, and also the stupidity of those who, arrogating to themselves wisdom while acting verily as so many fools, proceed to "enlighten" their more ignorant disciples. To quote R. Haym: "Die Zielscheibe des Spottes ist nicht die anonyme Torheit der Überweisheit überhaupt, die die grössten Albernheiten unter dem Schein von Vernunft und Zweckmässigkeit einschwärzt, sondern die prosaische Superklugheit der Bildungsphilister, die Trivialität und Abgeschmacktheiten der Aufklärer."<sup>1</sup> Their learning has no depth. Deeming themselves all important but void of any sense of the relativity of their own contributions to learning as compared with the great field of general culture, they are incapable of attaining to real knowledge. Tieck's satire of the theatre and particularly the partiality of the Berlin public for sentimental family plays, following the fashion set by Iffland and Kotzebue, begins in the "*Schildbürger*" and develops in subsequent plays. A.W. Schlegel in his criticism of the *Schildbürger* says: "Tieck sei keck wie ein Korsar in die Häfen der angesehenen Nation der *Schildbürger* eingelaufen,

<sup>1</sup> *Die Romantische Schule*. p. 88

die durch ihr Schutz- und Trutzbündnis mit den ebenfalls zahlreichen Philistern noch furchtbarer wird."<sup>1</sup> The vigour of Tieck's attack on all aspects of Aufklärung earned the admiration of his friends and inspired many later writers to follow his example.

"Der gestiefelte Kater" (1797), (a skit upon the popular sentimental play), confines its satire almost entirely to the theatre. Drab scenes from family life, elopements, visits from country cousins, Moors, Arabs, hussars and other ornate soldiers, water and fire displays--, such things alone attract the unimaginative public. "Nature" at all costs is the cry. If a foreign prince appears, he must needs speak a foreign language, it matters not if no one understands. The audience clamours for maudlin love-scenes, nightingales and moonlight, scope for tears. The reception of the play is frankly hysterical, ranging from howls and hisses to thunderous applause. As Keferstein points out,<sup>2</sup> a Philistine has no wish to be spiritually elevated by a play, because he sees no necessity for exaltation and does not recognise the limitations of his own existence; he prefers to see himself in his daily pursuits depicted on the stage, for thus he is reassured of the rectitude of his manner of life. He also enjoys seeing what happens to Philistines who kick over the traces of the moral code to which all Philistines are harnessed, and the fate of the delinquents gives him cause for much self-satisfaction.

1. Quoted by B. Stenius. *L. Tieck und die Volksbücher* p. 36

2. *op. cit.* pp 130 ff.

"Zerbino"<sup>1</sup> resumes the satire especially on the literary side, and attacks the pedantry and lack of feeling of Aufklärung. Tieck abhors smug pedants who boast of their learning but are incapable of doing anything spontaneously, who talk constantly of reason and common-sense, but are themselves quite unintelligent. The unpoetical elements of Aufklärung are the target of his scorn. When the prosaic Aufklärer Nestor strays into the Garden of Poetry, he finds it bare of his favourite poets. Hagedorn, Gellert, and Bodmer, he ranks before Shakespeare, an "absurd" author, with no artistic sense and no knowledge of the rules of writing! The Aufklärer apply the standard of rationalism universally and instead of allowing for irrational forces like genius and originality, demand that every work of art should conform to certain fixed rules. Nestor considers the Italian Renaissance poets unworthy of comparison with the Aufklärer. Wieland has improved on Ariosto! As Don Quixote provides subject for laughter it may be tolerated, but Galathea is a very youthful and immature production; as for Hans Sachs and Goethe, they are hardly recognised as poets by the Aufklärer, who despise what they do not understand. The rest of Tieck's work continues the satire in a similar strain, and his prosaic utilitarian bourgeois, his prudes and pedants are ever familiar figures.

In Phantasus (1811), Tieck refers to domestic life as a "gesetzte, kaltblütig moralische Philisterei", and in a dramatised fairy-tale of 1835 called "Die Vogelscheuche", he ironically allows one of the characters to praise

Philistinism for having preserved the German nature and originality. No sooner had Hemann delivered Germany from the Roman yoke than well-meaning patriots saw to it that progress was stemmed. "Dadurch erhält sich deutsche Natur und Art und Weise. Das Mittelmässige, Philisterhafte, das herrlich Lederne muss immer, immer wieder in seine Würde eingesetzt werden." The position was identical after the great struggle against Napoleon. "Damals schien alle gute und schöne Mittelmässigkeit unterzugehen, und wie schnell hat sie sich mit dem seichten Geschwätz und allen Muhmen, Basen und Klatschschwestern wieder erhoben!" Whenever Germany shows signs of advancing to greatness and forgetting her customary indifference in the enthusiasm of a common cause, Philistinism invariably intervenes and prevents her progress.

The major poetical works of NOVALIS, one of the most gifted of Romantic poets, are too mystical and symbolical to allow of satire, and we must turn to his "Fragments and Studies" for his views on the Philistine. Novalis' Fragments do not consist of unconnected thoughts scribbled at random. The Romantics considered fragment-writing a high form of art, calling for careful thought and logical construction. As Fr. Schlegel once said: "Ein Fragment muss gleich einem kleinen Kunstwerk von der umgebenden Welt ganz abgesondert und in sich selbst vollendet sein, wie ein Igel".<sup>1</sup> Many of Novalis' fragments conform to this rule and are of real artistic value.

<sup>1</sup> Athenäum fragment Nr 206. Quoted by Kluckhohn, Novalis Werke.



"BLÜTHENSTAUB", his first and most famous collection of fragments written for the Athenäum, shows his deep insight into the character of the Philistine.

Mental confusion Novalis declares to be the antithesis of Philistinism, for it connotes abundance of ability and power. The less systematic men are, the higher they can reach by means of diligent study, in spite of the obstacles which confront them at the outset. They have great labour in accustoming themselves to the drudgery of application, but once they have overcome their difficulties, they are lords and masters for ever. Unproblematic, orderly-minded Philistines on the other hand become no more than uninspired scholars and practical encyclopaedists. They reach a certain degree of proficiency without undue effort, but seldom attain any further, as they find progress increasingly difficult. Philistines find the first stages on the road to knowledge comparatively easy, but lacking the vital force of ideas and inspiration, they soon come to a standstill and never know the depths of science; hence the number of pedantic Philistines, whose learning is superficial and restricted to the knowledge of facts.

Truth is likewise unknown to Philistines, who never penetrate beyond the surface. Delusion is therefore another aspect of Philistinism. "Der Wahn lebt von der Wahrheit; die Wahrheit lebt ihr Leben in sich. Man vernichtet den Wahn wie man Krankheiten vernichtet, und der Wahn ist also nichts



als logische Entzündung oder Verlöschung, Schwärmerei oder Philisterei."

The last fragment in Blüthenstaub treating of the Philistine is a succinct summary of the poet's ideas, especially on the aesthetic side. Our everyday life, he says, is a series of ever returning actions, a means to our earthly existence, which is not an end in itself but merely a means to something higher. Philistines know of nothing higher. Material existence is their one aim. If it embraces a certain amount of poetry, that is only because there must be some variety in their daily life. Art is not a serious proposition to them but solely a form of recreation for their leisure hours. Every activity is regulated and turned to habit. They indulge in poetry usually once a week, on Sunday, when they cease work, live on a somewhat higher scale and consequently sleep more soundly at the end of the day. That is what poetry means to them! Their conventional pleasures are assimilated like everything else laboriously and punctiliously. They reach the acme of <sup>their</sup> poetic existence on a trip, at a wedding or christening, or in church; here their boldest desires are satisfied and often surpassed. To Philistines poetry is no more than the glamour of a social event which they attend arrayed in their Sunday clothes and from which they derive a little more diversion and excitement than usually fall to their share.

Religion has the same effect on them as a drug, either

stimulant or narcotic, according to their mood. They say their morning and evening prayers from force of habit, just as they breakfast and sup. They measure the joys of Heaven according to their own standard and are incapable of imagining anything beyond material happiness. To the lower type of Philistine, Heaven is little more than a fair on a large scale; to the more elevated, a beautiful cathedral perhaps, with fine music, pomp and ritual, furnished with chairs for the lower orders down below, the galleries being reserved for the elite. The centre of the Philistine's religion is not God, but the Philistine himself; indeed, he hardly gives a thought to God.

The worst kind of all are revolutionary Philistines. Arrant selfishness is the inevitable outcome of their mental limitation, for they know of nothing more absorbing than the sensation of the moment. It is then hardly a matter for surprise that their reason comes in time to serve self-interest alone, and that nothing is more vital to them than their own material prosperity.

Alluding to Philistines in politics in "Glauben und Liebe", another collection of fragments published after "Blüthenstaub", Novalis asserts that those who oppose princes in general and say that the only hope of prosperity lies in a representative, republican government as prevalent in France, are miserable, unintelligent Philistines, hiding their shallowness and inward

nakedness behind "the imposing mask of cosmopolitanism."

Carried away by the novelty of the French regime, they are incapable of foreseeing what the consequences of a similar government might be to Germany.

In the "Allgemeines Brouillon",<sup>1</sup> Novalis attacks the Philistine in yet another field, that of philosophy. "Das Kriterium der Anwendbarkeit ist das Merkmal der logischen Nützlichkeit. Logische Philister und logische Künstler. Ein andres Kriterium der Art ist das Merkmal der Mitteilbarkeit. Die Philosophie muss sich lernen lassen, heisst das Axiom." Even philosophy is judged from the utilitarian standpoint; it must be strictly conventional and conform to the prevailing religion, morals and public opinion. Otherwise it is worthless. In the first "Dialogue" (1798), the practical outlook of Philistines is mentioned again, this time with reference to their objection to reading on account of the enormous expenditure on books, which they consider an article of luxury.

Writing to his brother Erasmus from Wittenberg when finishing his law degree, Novalis praises the Philistine class, because in it "the exaggerated ideas of youth sink back into the limits of a definite activity."<sup>2</sup> Here he is using the word more with the meaning of Bürger, and his praise of the Philistine is probably accounted for by the fact that he has just fallen in love with a girl of the middle class. Later he contradicts this statement by saying activity alone can save

1. 1798-99

2. Aug. 1793

him from the miserable path of Philistinism on to which he is in danger of straying. "Ich gerate sonst auf den kümmerlichen Weg der Philisterei. Tätigkeit soll mich kurieren."<sup>1</sup>

Novalis is the poet of night, death, disease. He longs for the infinite and scorns the self-centred slave to matter and habit, the Philistine who judges everything from a practical point of view and sacrifices inspiration to the dictates of law and order. Interested only in material existence, the Philistine has no higher thoughts, no concern with the eternal and the mysteries of life; he is superficial in his attitude to art, religion, life itself.

Storm and Stress and the Romantics reproached the Aufklärer with moral hypocrisy, a result of their slavery to convention. As the Romantic attack on pseudo-learning when exaggerated seemed to condemn all learning, so the assault on the moral code, when carried to extremes, tended to become an attack on morals. This is exemplified in the case of Fr. SCHLEGEL's novel "Lucinde",<sup>2</sup> in which the author allows "Impudence" to be opposed to and overcome morals, delicacy, decency and modesty. The hero despises the haste with which Aufklärer pursue their material interests, missing the good things of life in the race for progress, and devotes himself to luxury and ease. Love being his one aim, he determines to liberate it from all Philistinism. The author never actually mentions the word Philistine although he had

1. *Fragmente und Studien*, §, 1800.

2. 1799.



previously used it in his correspondence, as for instance when he wrote to his brother August Wilhelm: "Dass Schleiermacher Popularität haben kann, ist ein Faktum. So haben mir viele Philister ihn, als einen sehr guten Prediger gerühmt."<sup>1</sup> It is however obvious that Lucinde is aimed against the Philistine, whose superficial morality the writer despised. His eagerness to stamp out Philistinism in love savours at times of the amoral, yet he does not really advocate the abolition of marriage but is merely defending the Romantic idea of elevating love.

Love is a religion to Fr. Schlegel, an end in itself, a symbol of eternity; it must be spiritualised and raised on to a higher plain. His doctrine is love for its own sake, a fully conscious love, but conscious only of itself, quite oblivious to the outer world. He tells of a generous, unqualified love, which a Philistine could never understand, and opposes an undue emphasis on the difference of the sexes, as personality is to him of far greater import than an accident of sex. For women who overlook the importance of individuality "sind die Männer nicht Menschen, sondern bloss Männer, eine eigene Gattung, die fatal, aber doch gegen die Langeweile unentbehrlich ist, Sie selbst sind denn auch eine blosse Sorte, ohne Originalität und ohne Liebe." People such as these destroy not only their own originality but also that of their children, whom they consider their property. All those who regard their accidental circumstances as final and do not recognise the

<sup>1</sup> Briefe an seinen Bruder August Wilhelm, 321. 28th Nov. 1797.



relativity of their own existence are equally at fault.

Marriage is badly in need of reform. "Was man eine glückliche Ehe nennt, verhält sich zur Liebe wie ein korrektes Gedicht zu improvisiertem Gesang," he states in one of the Fragments.<sup>1</sup> Emphasising the vitality and sincerity of illicit relationships, he decries the limitations of bourgeois marriage and denounces the State which endeavours to rationalise an essentially irrational factor like love, and which for the sake of law and order, compels people to remain together against their will. This, he maintains, destroys the spontaneity of love, which cannot be regulated by law or controlled by the claims of society. "Die Liebe ist nicht bloss das stille Verlangen nach dem Unendlichen, sie ist auch der heilige Genuss einer schönen Gegenwart. Sie ist nicht bloss eine Mischung, ein Übergang vom Sterblichen zum Unsterblichen, sondern sie ist eine völlige Einheit beider. Es gibt eine reine Liebe, ein unteilbares und einfaches Gefühl ohne die leiseste Störung von unruhigem Streben. Jeder gibt dasselbe was er nimmt, einer wie der andere, alles ist gleich und in sich vollendet wie der ewige Kuss der göttlichen Kinder."

Goethe, discussing JEAN PAUL's "Wahrheit aus meinem Leben", written in direct antipathy to his own "Dichtung und Wahrheit", said to Eckermann: "Als ob die Wahrheit aus dem Leben eines solchen Mannes etwas anders sein könnte, als dass der Autor ein Philister gewesen."<sup>2</sup> Goethe censured him in particular for

1. Fragment 268.

2. Eckermann 30th March 1831

relating the story of his life without interpreting it, without trying to discover the secrets that underlie reality; and to see no further than the surface is a fault common to most Philistines. Though Goethe was perhaps somewhat prejudiced in his view, it is nevertheless undeniable that Jean Paul revealed some Philistine characteristics. He never shed certain traces of the provincialism described so convincingly in his novels, but it was only the outward evidences of provincialism that cleaved to him. He was inwardly exceptionally warm-hearted and generous, and like Raabe, had a warm corner for some of the Philistines he persistently mocked. Again although pedants were a favourite object of his scorn, he was apt to be pedantic himself. To quote Küpper:<sup>1</sup> "Es ist bezeichnend für diesen Dichter, dass ihm Gefühl und Verstand nicht die gleichen Wege wiesen und dass er, die innersten menschlichen Regungen schon ohne jede Reflektion erfassend, schauend und darstellend, sich noch langhin mit vielen flachen sittlichen Forderungen und Erkenntnissen der Aufklärer in den Fragen der äusseren Lebensgestaltung übereins erklärte." In spite of his depth of feeling and wealth of ideas, he never lost trace of the rationalistic tendencies of his youth, the heritage of Aufklärung.

As with Faust, there were two souls within Jean Paul's breast, the one inclined to Philistinism, the other a great genius. Having lived in a little town and become accustomed to the parochialism, the domesticity of its uninspired inhabitants

<sup>1</sup> Jean Pauls Wuz. p. 60.

he took a kindly interest in the details of their everyday life, but the genius in him, torn by doubts and anxieties, yearned for freedom, and, like Dr Fenk in the Unsichtbare Loge, hated the provincialism and intolerance of the small town-dwellers. These conflicting elements are well brought out in the two figures in "Flegeljahre",<sup>1</sup> into which Jean Paul split his own character, the simple provincial Walt, awe-inspired at the sight of a noble or court official, and Vult, the sarcastic, versatile man of the world. This conflict of realism and idealism, the thought of the dualism of man, so prevalent among the Romantics, is continually recurring in Jean Paul's works. When he depicts the contrast between Siebenkäs' idealistic yearnings and the narrow limitations of his everyday life, he is revealing his own experiences in Hof, where the course of his genius was hindered by poverty and the want of material necessities. This contrast is paralleled in the history of Germany by the lack of correspondence between the great philosophical and poetical revival of the 18th century and the narrow, oppressive circumstances of bourgeois society.

Jean Paul's favourite theme is the description of everyday life in the small German town, Kuhschnappel, Krähwinkel or Scheerau, as the case may be. The small town is particularly fertile soil for the growth of Philistinism, as the interests of the inhabitants are generally limited to their own circle and there is little opportunity for meeting other people and

forming new ideas.. Kleinstaaterei increased the stagnation of the small town by robbing it of all responsibility and placing it in the hands of some petty prince. Jean Paul's works teem with satire of a political nature directed against the petty courts, which he had learned to despise and hate from personal experience. There is a sameness about the inhabitants of Jean Paul's imaginary towns, and although the poet looks on them from aloft and mocks their narrow outlook, yet it is obvious from the detailed study he gives of their lives that they have a great fascination for him.

Although Jean Paul does not avail himself of the expression "Philistine" or "Philistinism" in his novels, he repeatedly decries the banality of ordinary married life. The chains of matrimony tie the wings of poetry and destroy idealism. The wedding ring has powers similar to that of Gyges, for it makes all the arts invisible. Although at one time Jean Paul says he wishes to marry a sweet girl who can cook and will laugh and cry with him, at other times he emphasises the more romantic kind of love, a love like that of Siebenkäs for Natalie, which in contrast to the "prosaic sultry summer day" of his married life was "a poetical spring night with blossoms and stars." In Siebenkäs he confesses he has no desire to marry someone who is merely an efficient housekeeper but would like his wife to enter into some of his higher thoughts and see more in the universe than a nursery or a dance-hall. He condemns not only



women as Philistines in affairs of the heart, he also ridicules the business man's horror of romance and courtship, maintaining that the average bourgeois would prefer to woo the girl of his choice by proxy, so that he should have nothing to do but marry her.

Lenette<sup>1</sup> is the classical example of the unimaginative Philistine housewife in the small town. Though kind-hearted and well-meaning, she drives her less practical husband to distraction with her stupidity and nagging and incessant washing and sweeping. The tragedy is that she is married to a sensitive man who craves mental companionship and understanding and finds none. She has no sense of humour, no capacity for enjoyment, no enthusiasm for anything, not even for love. When he kisses her she listens for the milk boiling over, and if ever he reads some particularly touching verse to her, interrupts with prosaic questions as to what they should have for supper. She is completely bound by bourgeois society with its customs and festivals, and would rather dispense with the gospel than forego her Christmas pudding. Her taste in literature is especially irritating to a man of letters like her husband. She has no pronounced preference for anything and could read a book of sermons as often as scholars read Homer or Kant. The cookery book is her bible, but like Racine's wife, she never reads her husband's works. A conversation with the book-binder's wife means more to her than any book.

1. (*The wife of Siebenkäs*) 1796.

The average bourgeois has no understanding at all for the arts. His practical outlook restricts him to an interest in more remunerative professions than writing. For the tradesmen in Siebenkäs two kinds of fools exist, philosophers and poets. The Kuhschnappler have no regard for such people with no money and no official position. Trade maintains its man, but "book-writing is no better than cotton-spinning"; they respect only studies which lead to material gain. The Hoffiskal Knoll in "Flegeljahre" admits that he has no objection to a rhymed Latin verse written by one who has nothing better to do, but considers verse-writing a ridiculous pastime for steady lawyers. In the same novel Vult gives vent to his disgust with the Philistine's want of appreciation for music and "die grässliche Bespritzung des einzigen Himmlischen, das noch über die Lebensspiessbürgerei oben vorüberfliegt."

Time and again Jean Paul satirises the Philistine's attitude to Nature. In "Flegeljahre" he describes how the trees in the garden of the tradesman Neupeter are adorned with little notices telling the reader what he should admire: "Der Graf stand vor den nächsten Gefühlbrettern und Herzblättern poetischer Blumen fest; auch der Notar las den an die Welt wie an Arzneigläschen gebundenen Gebrauchzettel herab, welcher verordnete, wie man schöne Natur einzunehmen habe, in welchen Löffeln und Stunden." Again in "Hesperus" he narrates how: "Die Klein-Wiener oder Flachsenfinger öffnen dem Genuss der Natur weniger ihr Herz als

ihren Magenmund-Auen sind die Küchenstücke ihres Viehes, und Gärten die ihrer Besitzer - die Milchstrasse fesselt und sättigt ihren Geist (ob sie gleich länger ist) nicht halb so sehr als die Königsberger Bratwurst."

Like so many earlier writers, Jean Paul never ceases to scorn the pettiness and intolerance of the Philistine, but he draws each figure individually and is not content with depicting a type. In a phrase of Marcus,<sup>1</sup> he has painted the picture of provincial life with all the wealth of detail of a Flemish master. Wuz reveals the joys and sorrows of the schoolmaster in the narrow limitations of village life, Siebenkäs the materialism and superficiality of the officials, the depravity of the petty roué, the lack of sympathy of the nagging, practical wife; Flegeljahre scorns distorted pedantry and prosaic utilitarianism, Unsichtbare Loge empty talk and scandalmongering. Many of the ideas have been previously treated, but the earlier poets when attacking the Philistine regarded him as an enemy; Jean Paul was not hostile to the man he criticised but had a warm corner for him in his heart, and we discern throughout his understanding and genuine love for the simple people he so frequently derides.

Of KOTZEBUE's many amusing skits on life in a small German town and the Philistinism of its inhabitants, "Die Deutschen Kleinstädter"<sup>2</sup> is perhaps the most typical. The scene is laid

<sup>1</sup> Jean Paul und Heinrich Heine p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> 1803.

in the same sort of town as Jean Paul uses for the setting of his novels, and it is named "Krähwinkel" after the fictitious small town of his creation. The inhabitants are characterised by the same pettiness and superficiality, the same love of show. Titles play an all-important role in their lives: "Hier wird nicht gefragt: Hat er Kenntnisse? Verdienste? Sondern, wie titulierte man ihn?" An eligible young man's position is of far more account than his character to mothers seeking a good match for their daughters. The Krähwinklers' anxiety to impress a distinguished guest goes so far that they never leave him alone for a moment and embarrass him with their exaggerated courtesy. Outward polish means more to them than innate culture. Their curiosity leads them to inquire into the details of everybody's private life. Their womenfolk think only of money, clothes and housekeeping and spend most of their time gossiping. "Unsere Muhmen sind alle Klatschmäuler."

The Krähwinklers' ideas on art differ in no wise from those of the average Philistine. They approve of portrait painting only for important, married people, and insist that the picture must be painted "mit der gehörigen Gravität in Lebensgrösse, einer Spitzenhalskrause und einem Blumenstock in der Hand." They consider it sinful to hang miniatures on ribbons and chains!

Kotzebue himself wrote several continuations to the *Kleinstädter*, very similar in content and style but containing nothing new in the way of satire. His play gave rise to a host of other



sketches on similar themes. Holl<sup>1</sup> maintains that its force is as active today as ever it was: "Das philisterhafte Krähwinklertum, das auch in der Grosstadt heimisch ist, mit seiner Titel- und Rangsucht, seiner Aufgeblasenheit gegen Untergebene und Katzbuckelei gegen Höherstehende, seinem Cliquenwesen, seiner bösen Zunge, seinem Aufbauschen von Neuigkeiten: es lebt heute noch."

Classics and Romantics agreed in their dislike and condemnation of Kotzebue. To quote Holl again: "Die Gegnerschaft geht auf das tiefste Wesen der Kunst, worin Klassik und Romantik übereinstimmen, auf jene höchsten Menschheitsziele künstlerischer Erziehung die mit Unterhaltungsware nie zufrieden sind."<sup>2</sup> Kotzebue's attitude to art was flippant, he had no idea of the mission of a poet, no concern with the deep problems of humanity, but wrote simply to entertain the sentimental public. He was therefore bound to clash with genuine poets whose writings had a higher aim. He gave the public just what appealed to them, realising the shallowness of what he wrote but asking no more than applause. He was fully aware of the weaknesses of his admirers and often mocked them in the very plays they so heartily applauded. The fact that he met with enormous success all over Europe is a tribute to his insight into the average bourgeois mind of the time.

The satire of the Philistine is approached by each of the

1. Geschichte des deutschen Lustspiels p 209.  
 2. " " " " " p 211

older Romantic writers from a different angle, each one emphasising that particular aspect of Philistinism which to him personally is the most objectionable. Tieck attacks mainly Aufklärung, Novalis utilitarianism and superficiality, Fr. Schlegel the banality and hypocrisy of bourgeois marriage, Jean Paul the pettiness of the small town-dweller: but although the satire differs somewhat according to the individual nature of the authors, they share the same positive beliefs, the same philosophy of life. Yearning for the infinite, they stress the value of variety and freedom, of genius, personality and enthusiasm. The unconscious and supernatural play an important role in their lives and they idealise love and art as the sole means of approaching the eternal. Consequently they despise those who are inspired by none of their ideals and are content with finite things, with life in a rut. In short they aim one and all at the common foe and direct their hostilities against the Philistine as the enemy of poetry and idealism.

## CHAPTER SIX.

### THE LATER ROMANTICS.

The Romantic campaign against the Philistines reaches its zenith in BRENTANO'S humorous essay "Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte" (1811). It was written for a Berlin club, "Die christlich deutsche Tischgesellschaft", to which belonged Brentano, Arnim and many of the Prussian "Junkerpartei", supporters of Kleist's Abendblätter. They aimed at restoring the strength of a country ruined by the wars with Napoleon and were dissatisfied with what they considered the half-hearted methods of Hardenberg and the government. Many a sentence against the government intended for the Abendblätter but banned by a wary censor found its way into Brentano's paper.

Long before this time, about the year 1800, Brentano had read a "Naturgeschichte des Philisters" to Tieck and the Schlegels and other friends at Jena, the hot-bed of Romanticism. Tieck narrates<sup>1</sup> how Fichte was present at the reading, at the end of which he stood up and said to the assembled company: "Nun werde ich Euch aus dieser Geschichte beweisen, dass eben der Brentano hier der erste und ärgste unter allen Philistern ist", and forthwith proceeded to carry out his threat, the reason for his hostility being perhaps annoyance with Brentano's criticisms of his philosophy.

<sup>1</sup> Köpcke, L. Tieck's Erinnerungen usw. Teil I p. 251.

Although some of the ideas of the *Naturgeschichte* appeared in other works, including *Godwi* and *Bogs*, Brentano did not resume his attack in any detail until 1811, when he expanded his subject and treated many matters of topical interest, favourite themes of the *Abendblätter*. The essay is divided into three parts dealing with the origin of the Philistine, the biblical story and the modern variety.

The *Tischgesellschaft* was barred to Jews and Philistines, for the members were opposed to the growing emancipation of the Jews and resented the important part their salons were playing in the social life of the capital. Brentano, greatly daring, classes Jews and Philistines together as the two extremities of Philistinism: "Juden und Philister sind entgegengesetzte Polen; was bei den ersten in den Samen, ist bei den letzteren ins Kraut geschossen". In the early days of creation Jews had been protagonists of divine thought and enemies of the Philistines, but since the time of Samson their Philistinism and materialism had gradually developed so that, as Goethe also suggested, when Christ came their obstinate blindness to His divinity earned for them the curse of the Wandering Jew.

Brentano attacks the enemy of enthusiasm and genius and the Romantic ideals in all spheres of life. The Philistine never really lives at all, he is spiritually dead for he lacks



all the quickening elements. "Ein Philister ist ein steifstelliger, steifleinener oder auch lederner, scheinlebendiger Kerl, der nicht weiss, dass er gestorben ist und ganz unnötigerweise sich länger auf der Welt aufhält; ein Philister ist ein mit allerlei lächerlichen äusserlichen Lebenszeichen behängter, umwandelnder Leichenbitterstock seines eigenen innern ewigen Todes;--- der ausgeborene Feind aller Idee, aller Begeisterung, alles Genies und aller freien göttlichen Schöpfung".

Lucifer was the first Philistine, "der als Bild, gebildet, eingebildet und ausgebildet, als geneintes Nein, sich über das Ja erheben wollte und zur Hölle niedergestürzt wurde". He represents "die Materie und das ausgeborene ewige Nein, der Feind der Idee als ewiger Einheit, das bloss sich selbst bedeuten Wollende, der Satan und in seinen weiteren Ausgeburten die Sünde, der Philister". Negation is the eternal source of Philistinism about which there is nothing positive, either vicious or virtuous, for it is born of enmity to ideas in general and thrives upon slavery to routine and precedent.

Brentano traces the Philistine through the Old Testament from Cham, the third son of Noah, in whom "Feuer irdischer Lust und grobes Fassen ins Fleisch" were the main characteristics. Samson, the arch-enemy of the Philistines, devoted his life to a campaign against them and died a hero's death at

their hands. And yet, Brentano maintains, he must have been at one period of his life infected by Philistinism, for he became associated with a prostitute, a depth to which only a Philistine could descend. Brentano and his friends took exception to the State's countenancing immorality. "Ich nenne dergleichen Philisterei, weil der herrlichste Trieb im Menschen, ohne Heiligung durch den Priester oder ohne Heiligung durch Kühnheit, Abenteuer und Gefahr ekelhaft und bequem befriedigt, eine Philisterei ist und die Anerkennung, der Schutz solcher Sünderinnen nur durch eine Philistergesinnung in einem Staat kann eingeführt werden." Brentano is not afraid of arraigning the government, and quotes this censure from an essay of Achim von Arnim's written for the *Abendblätter* but banned by the censor by reason of its attack on State institutions. The *Tischgesellschaft* despised the moral hypocrisy prevalent at the time and held that such outrages as the sanction of prostitution could be tolerated only when Philistines are at the helm, a not infrequent occurrence as "Staatsklugheit mit Niederträchtigkeit verbunden ist ein Hauptzug aller Philister".

In his discussion of the modern Philistine, Brentano describes how the expression originated in the Universities, an invention of enthusiastic, idealistic youth to denote non-students, and Philistines are still, he maintains, those who are not students "im weiteren Sinne eines Studierenden, eines

Erkenntnisbegierigen, ----- eines Menschen, der in der Erforschung des Ewigen, der Wissenschaft Gottes, begriffen, der alle Strahlen des Lichtes in seiner Seele freudig spiegeln lässt, eines Anbetenden der Idee". Goethe who made a signal attempt to defend the spirit of poetry against the Philistines is extolled as a perfect example of the "Nichtphilister", "der auf allen Punkten seiner selbst gleich stark empfängt und gibt, und diesen denke ich mir als eine Kugel, nenne ihn den Gesunden, Natürlichen, den Gebildeten".

Brentano's idealisation of Goethe as the Anti-Philistine is echoed in the letters of his sister Bettina in Goethe's "Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde",<sup>1</sup> in which the Philistine is represented as the enemy of Goethe and all great poets. Recalling the words of her mother Maximiliane von La Roche she writes: "Die Poesie sei dazu, um das edle, einfache, grosse aus den Krallen des Philistertums zu retten, alles sei Poesie in seiner Ursprünglichkeit und der Dichter sei dazu, diese wieder hervorzurufen, weil alles nur als Poesie sich verewige". Bettina appreciates the difficulties with which Goethe as a poet has to contend: "Ach Gott! das Philistertum ist eine harte Nuss, nicht leicht aufzubeissen, und mancher Kern vertrocknet unter dieser harten Schale----- Die Leidenschaft ist ja der einzige Schlüssel zur Welt; durch die lernt der Geist alles kennen und fühlen, wie soll er sonst in sie hineinkommen"?

<sup>1</sup> II, 214, 215

Brentano's description of the early morning habits of a model Philistine finds him awaking from a dreamless slumber, his nightcap undisturbed overnight, for he never stirs in his sleep. Having performed his ablutions and donned a quantity of thick clothing, he proceeds to eat a few juniper berries as a precaution against yellow fever. He gives a short discourse on prayer to his children, explaining afterwards to his wife that while they must be taught respect for outward appearances they will learn soon enough the superstition of prayer. Then he smokes his pipe (for which Philistines have a very pronounced like or dislike), winds up all the clocks in the house and writes the date in chalk over the door. After repeated encouragement from his wife, he drinks his coffee, but woe betide the poor woman if it is not hot enough!

To exemplify the Philistinism apparent during the stages of courtship and betrothal, Brentano tells the story of a young man living in Wetzlar, an acknowledged haunt of Philistines since Goethe's Werther, for here it was that Werther came into tragic conflict with Philistinism. Wetzlar was also the home of Albert, on whom the young man in question is modelled, and it housed the antiquated Reichskammergericht, which added to the stagnation of the little town.

The youth, having become attracted to a girl whose



acquaintance he made in the law-courts proceeds to woo her by proxy. An old procurator is commissioned to ask her hand in marriage and to send the suitor, in the event of the overture's being successful, the 37th volume of a Wetzlar law-book, corresponding to the 37 years of her age. The bridegroom elect thereupon reads a book on the art of being happy to ensure a correct behaviour. Once married he has no objection to his wife's having other men friends if they are willing to join him in a smoke or a game of cards. There is no one quite so conscious of his own importance as the Philistine. He even goes to church (as Schiller and Novalis had already remarked) to impress others and keep up the credit of his family. Neither has he any knowledge of the supernatural but seeks an explanation for all marvels and wonders "aus seiner miserablen Philisternatur." Nature for him does not go beyond the limits of his own experience; deeming himself uncommon and distinguished he is condescending in his attitude to others, and congratulates himself, like Wagner in Faust, on living at a time when men so great as he are alive.

Brentano's impeachment of the Bildungsphilister differs to no great extent from that of his predecessors, the authors of the Xenien, Lenz, Tieck, Novalis. The Schildbürger and Tieck's Aufklärer correspond to Brentano's Philistines, their defects being identical. Like Nestor in Zerbino, the Philistines are

blamed for their lack of discrimination and appreciation of genuine poetry. They share the Schildbürgers' absence of interest in amusing literature as they cannot recognise real wit, and in spite of their incessant talk of patriotism think German culture and refinement cannot possibly prosper independently of France.

One of the few new notes in the literary satire is the repudiation of the fashionable fate tragedy. As long as repeated mention is made of the word "Schicksal", Philistines are satisfied with a play quite unconnected with fate, happy in the illusion that it is a drama of Schiller's at least.

"Dichtende Philister sind durch den Schwung den sie nehmen nur noch ekelhafter als zuvor"; they are the really harmful type. Breathing sentimentality and scorn for the world they worship Karl Moor and Fiesko (an accusation that reveals the Romantic opposition to Schiller). They dote upon Schiller's works because their long, sententious passages provide admirable quotations for autograph books. The latest aesthetic theories find ready acceptance with them and they endeavour to learn the secrets of successful authorship from books which teach the art of imitation. They never introduce new themes into their writings and criticise what they do not even understand. The translators among them arrogate to themselves the attributes of authorship, overlooking the genius of the master who conceived the ideas

which they are only rendering into another tongue.

Brentano strikes a new line of attack on Philistinism in the fine arts. Philistine taste in music is banal as in literature. Ignoring Beethoven and the great composers they clamour for low trifling music. Blind to the beauty of Gothic architecture and of the priceless old paintings on the houses of Nürnberg and Augsburg, they would prefer to see every building whitewashed. New too is the onset upon men like Campe and C.H. Wolcke for their absurd exaggerations in trying to rid the German language of foreign borrowings and, for example, substituting "Schallwerkzeug" for "Instrument", "Tageleuchter" for "Fenster", "Heilstoffhandlung" for "Apotheke".

The "Einsiedlerzeitung" which Brentano and Arnim and other young Romantics had launched in 1808 with the aim of reviving old literature had met with no response, so Brentano shared Tieck's anger at the lack of interest for folklore. The patriotism of the Philistines is superficial and the past glory of their country leaves them unmoved. The prevalence of foreign influences destroys the individuality of old German culture. Brentano's zeal to dispense with foreign influence in literature makes a curious contrast with his objection to the movement for purifying the German language by ridding it of foreign words. Nowadays these two tendencies

go together.

Like Tieck, Brentano is highly critical in his attitude to the theatre, where Philistinism is strongly in evidence. The degenerate state of the modern theatre is due to Philistines content with mediocrity because they have not the requisite culture to set a higher standard of acting and drama. They flock to hear Iffland and Kotzebue, spending large sums on the upkeep of the theatre, but their support of weak plays and bad actors ruins the drama. If only they had less regard for the theatre there might be some hope for it, but when Philistines like Melina take up acting as a trade, it is death to art.

Philistines are too shallow to understand any philosophy; if not completely overawed by it they learn certain theories by heart and repeat them on every possible occasion. "Von einer unendlichen, gleichzeitigen, ewigen Bewegung des Erkennens und seiner Heiligkeit haben sie keine Idee".

In the Kupfertafel two kinds of pseudo-philosophical Philistines are depicted, one "dem alles zu kurz wird", and the other "dem alles zu lang wird". The first looks upward with one eye and downward with the other and "alle irdischen Armel reichen nicht hin, indem er sich aufstreckt, das Licht auf seinem Haupt zu putzen". He aims at the heights but fails to reach his goal by reason of his shortcomings in many directions.



The second type goes to the other extreme; he has become so abstract that he has lost all touch with the world.

Throughout the story the negative is proclaimed to be the direct source of Philistinism. There are no positive signs of the disease and its outward evidences do not prove its inward presence, which depends on the individual outlook on life. "Kein Weib als weiblich ist Philister und kein Mann als männlich, sondern man kann es nur im Konflikt mit der Geschichte oder vielmehr mit ihrem Geiste sein, je weniger nun ein Geschlecht mit diesem in Verhältnisse kömmt, je weniger Gelegenheit zur Philisterei hat es". Thus animals are not Philistines unless they become domesticated, nor are savages, imbeciles and madmen, all those restricted by the laws of Nature. No one is more removed from Philistinism than the simple peasant, but the moment he goes a step further into civilisation he is in danger of falling into its snare.

From start to finish the essay teems with phantastic exaggerations, puns, similes, jocose, facetious and ironic remarks. Brentano uses his linguistic genius to its full extent to express his wealth of ideas on the subject. There is no end to his ingenuity in detecting disparaging comparisons for the Philistine, who is likened to an onion, a flying cat, a seal or a goose, as the case may be. The author's power of imagination stands him in good stead when seeking convincing

arguments on which to base the resemblance. Poetical Philistines are likened to bats, a cross between mice and birds, day and night: "Ihr Ziehen in der Dämmerung, das Verworrene in ihrer Gestalt, der häuterne Flügel, oder die philisterne Poesie sind gleich fatal". Philosophical Philistines are declared to resemble a row of ducks passing a piece of bacon from one to another, or geese whose livers have been so over-developed that the birds themselves wonder whether they are geese or merely liver. Philistinism as a disease is compared with smallpox: "Und so wie die Blätter konvex und ansteckend den aktiven Philister bezeichnet, so bildet die Narbe konkav den passiven, und diese laufen am häufigsten herum--- Dieses passive Philistertum nun ist das philistrische Leiden, Ertragen, Dulden, Schweigen, Gutseinlassen, Fristsuchen-- und wer sich schuldlos fühlt, der werfe den ersten Stein auf sich"!

Brentano never creates a finished picture of an individual Philistine, nor does he analyse one particular character, but he describes in detail various features of Philistine life and thought, never failing to find arguments to prove the Philistinism of the subject of attack. Not all the charges he brings against Philistines are logically deduced, and he is not above denouncing as Philistine some perfectly ordinary habit like smoking, for no better reason than that it does not appeal to him personally.

In a criticism of the work in 1832, Moritz Hauptmann remarked: "Ich finde es komisch, wie das Ganze mit Hand und Füßen sich gegen das Negative wehrt und doch im gewissen Sinne selbst nicht aus dem Negativen herauskommt".<sup>1</sup> Brentano's satire is mainly negative because he presents the Philistine as the antithesis of the poet and Romantic idealism. Half German, half Italian, Brentano was perhaps the most uncertain of all the young Romantics. He had no steady hold on reality and was haunted by a vague yearning for the infinite, a "Dämon namenloser Unruhe". Moreover he lacked application and self-confidence and the will power necessary to develop his talents. Perceiving the dangers of his own temperament, he implored his sister Bettina: "Sei fleissig und mache, dass dir das bürgerlich Mechanische in Leben nicht verächtlich wird, es ist die Quell von viel Geistigem".<sup>2</sup> But Bettina laughed at this "Philister-glosse",<sup>2</sup> and indeed Brentano could not bring himself to carry out his own advice. A home and family and settled profession he regarded as barriers to genius, as destroying vitality and progress and the poetry in life. Secretly perhaps not a little jealous of the happiness enjoyed by the average man and denied to him, he laughed to scorn the smug Philistine who has no sympathy with the problems of the poet and finds content in the humdrum daily round. To quote Gundolf: "Sein Dichterstolz ist, beim Leichtnehmen des Dichteramts oder der Dichterweihe, eher

1. Briefe an Franz Hausen p. 41

2. Quoted by Hoch. Ausbreitung und Verfall der Romantik p. 170.

ein Gefühl der Freiheit vom Spiessertum-- als die verantwortliche Strenge gegen das eigene Schaffen und Wirken, die Treue gegen die Gaben der Götter. Die pflichtlose Freiheit und fliegende Laune, das angeborene Widerphilisterium des Geblüts machen einen Hauptreiz seines Schaffens aus".<sup>1</sup>

Brentano's satire of Philistinism is continued in a similar strain in other works, *Gustav Wasa*, *Godwi*, *Chronika eines fahrenden Schülers*, *Aloys und Imelda*, but always in a more restrained and moderate manner, and never again does it reach the degree of force and originality attained in this paper.

On being read to the Tischgesellschaft, "Der Philister, vor, in und nach der Geschichte" was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm. The copyist had difficulty in keeping pace with the demand, so it was decided to publish the paper by subscription of the members, and the censor did not get to hear of it until after the issue of the first edition which was hailed by all those of the same school of thought. Among those who felicitated Brentano on his success was Wilhelm Grimm, who wrote in 1811: "Ihre Abhandlung über Philister ist vortrefflich, ich habe sie mit grossem Vergnügen gelesen. Für meinen Bruder Karl exzerpir ich ernsthaft gemeint die Philisterregeln, er ist

<sup>1</sup> *Romantiker* p. 187.



jetzt sehr vorteilhaft in Hamburg placirt und kann sie gewiss befolgen".<sup>1</sup>

Fichte however, presiding over the meeting of the club on the 18th Jan. 1812, was careful to point out that club-members sponsoring the campaign against the Philistine must beware lest they fall into their own trap, as confidence in one's own superiority is the surest sign of Philistinism.

A verse he wrote for the occasion ran thus:<sup>2</sup>

"Mit dem Philister ist die Sache schon feiner,  
Streng genommen, keiner sich durchschaut,  
So lang er steckt in der sündigen Haut-----  
Ob wir durchaus nicht Philister waren  
Werden wir im ewigen Leben'fahren----  
So wer in der Tat nicht Philister ist,  
Der denkt dessen zu keiner Frist;  
Ohne seinen Dank und Willen, und schlechtweg er's nicht ist.  
Wer aber sich's hin und her beweist  
Und Gott am Morgen und Abend preist,  
Dass er nicht ist wie andere Leut',  
Ist vom Philistertum nicht weit.  
Ja, ihm sitzt die Philisterei  
Gerade im Denken, dass er's nicht sei".

In the footsteps of Brentano followed EICHENDORFF, whose numerous plays and stories besieged the enemy from the customary standpoint and who never tired of mocking bad taste and imperviousness to ideas. He denounced the vogue for the fate tragedy and the insipid, lifeless imitations of Shakespeare and Scott, as well as the self-complacency of a public represented by Herr Publikum in "Viel Lärmen um Nichts", a Philistine for whom the material pleasures of life are of

1. 2nd June 1811

2. Quoted by M. Lohau. Der Philister. p. 295

infinitely greater import than the aesthetic.

Eichendorff's novel "Ahnung und Gegenwart" records the lack of correspondence between Romantic idealism and the miserable realities of the age. Bitterly condemning society with its false values and dearth of nobler ideals, its hypocrisy and love of outward show, the poet proclaims that Europe is a prey to Philistinism: "Unglauben, Gewalt, Verrat, und ihr Herz dabei besonders eingeschrumpft. Pfui, ich habe keine Lust mehr an der Philisterin"! The poems likewise portray Germany at the mercy of the Philistines:

"Es ist ein Land wo die Philister thronen,  
Die Krämer fahren und das Grün verstauben,  
Die Liebe selber altklug feilscht mit Händen,  
Herr Gott, wie lang willst du die Brut verschonen"? <sup>2.</sup>

The earth, he declares, is teeming with worms:

"Das ist die Brut der Natter  
Die immer neu entstand:  
Philister und ihre Gevatter  
Die machen gross Geschnatter  
Im deutschen Vaterland". <sup>3.</sup>

With the despairing lover the poet says:

"Ich wollt, ich jagt gerüstet  
Und legt die Lanze aus  
Und jagte alle Philister  
Zur schönen Welt hinaus". <sup>4.</sup>

Leontin, the hero of "Ahnung und Gegenwart", has a dread of becoming commonplace. "Werde nicht wie alle andere, werde niemals ein trauriger, vornehmer, schmunzelnder, bequemer

1. 1815

2. Unmut 1834.

3. Kriegshied 1833.

4. Der verzweifelte Liebhaber 1837.

Philister", his student friends warn him. Sought in marriage he cries: "Rückt mir nicht auf den Hals mit einem soliden, häuslichen, langweiligen Glück, mit einer abgestandenen Tugend im Schlafrock--- Heiraten und fett werden, mit der Schlafmütze auf dem Kopfe hinaussehen, wie draussen Aurora scheint", shuddering at the thought of having to partake of Philistine amusements.

The satire of "Aesthetic tea-parties" as yet another activity of Philistinism strikes a new note. At first the fashion of forgathering to discuss literature had been encouraged by the intellectuals of Berlin, but the meetings soon attracted the Philistine element and degenerated into wordy discussions of the arts with neither inner knowledge nor understanding. "Die Poesie kam nicht zum Vorscheine vor lauter Komplimenten davor und Anstalten dazu-- Friedrich kamen diese Poesierer in ihrer durchaus polierten, glänzenden, wohlerzogenen Weichlichkeit wie der fade, unerquickliche Teedampf, die zierliche Teekanne mit ihrem lodernden Spiritus auf dem Tische wie der Opferaltar dieser Musen vor".

Eichendorff's main work on the Philistine is a dramatic fairy-tale entitled "Krieg den Philistern", published in 1824 and acclaimed by all supporters of Romanticism. The novelty lies in the fact that it is the first play devoted exclusively to an onslaught on the Philistines, not confining its attack to the declared foes of the Romantics but also ridiculing the

absurd exaggerations and extravagances of some of their adherents. The banality and puerility of the Philistines is rivalled only by that of the so-called "Poetischen" who declare war on them in the name of poetry. There is as much harm in a surfeit of pseudo-culture as in a deficiency of real culture. The Dresdener Liederkreis, a circle of would-be poets who observed the outward forms of Romanticism without appreciating its real spirit, brought home to Eichendorff the deplorable results of too full a measure of phantasy and sentimentality. At the time when this play was written the rich "Kunstphilister" who despised every one who did not dabble in art was a familiar figure in Berlin society. The "Philisterstadt", the scene of action, is obviously Berlin and the play teems with satirical allusions to the life and doings of its inhabitants. Art had become a social perquisite affording the Philistine matter for idle prattling. The Romantic love for the Middle Ages was perverted into an absurd imitation of what were assumed to have been the habits of mediaeval times, but when in one scene the "Deutschtümler" come face to face with real people from that period, they fail to recognise them, so false has been their idea of the age.

The actual Philistines are presented here in the usual way, a little variety being introduced in the scenes treating of the war with the "Poetischen". Material success is the



dominant idea and they are guilty of all the faults commonly attributed to their kind.

"Sieh ein Philister  
 Das ist dir so ein Vieh illustre  
 Gar nichts versteht er und viel liest er,  
 Spottwenig trinkt er und viel isst er,  
 Kurz so ein schofler, fahler, trister"---

Slaves to convention and routine, uninspired by love of adventure or a desire for experience, Philistines acquit themselves of their daily task without distinction, talking at length of insignificant things, while each one deems himself more important than his neighbour. The staple form of amusement is a family visit to a cafe on Sunday. Like the childish audience in the "Kater" nothing causes them more delight than cheers, illuminations and military displays.

Their conception of Nature is strictly conventional, nightingales, running brooks and so forth alone evoking their admiration. They have not the least urge to study Nature. While acknowledging the practical value of trees, they have no use for uncultivated country, resenting the inconvenience caused by the absence of policemen to give directions. "Nichts als Steine und Wasserfälle, und die Blumen wachsen einem überall zwischen die Beine".

Love to them is made up of flirting, sentimentality and petty intrigues, for their parade of virtue will not bear scrutiny: "So eine Liebhaberei in der Liebe ohne Liebe ist

doch eine prächtige, kommode Sache."

As successful business men they thank God they have used their talents to better advantage than some of their school-fellows, who have adopted verse-writing as a profession. Their literary activities are restricted to the reading of a page of the Classics by way of recreation and the composition of an occasional poem on a family festival.

"Aus den Klassikern lernen wir deklinieren,  
Aus den Poeten richtig skandieren,  
Doch das Träumen, poetische Walten-  
Neindas Zeug lässt sich nicht mehr halten."

Only when the Philistines become intoxicated with the nectar of the "Poetischen" do they flock into the realms of poetry.

"Ein betrunkenener Philister ist ein armer Tropf,  
Da laufen sie alle in die Poesie hinein  
Das bisschen Nektar! war so viel Wasser drein  
So'n Philister hat doch 'nen schwachen Kopf."

Though "Krieg den Philistern" was enthusiastically received in 1824 it has not a lasting appeal, as the numerous allusions to the foibles of the time have now lost their significance. The play, though amusing in parts, is suggestive of Tieck rather than Brentano, for Eichendorff has neither the wit nor the linguistic genius that distinguish Brentano's treatise.

E.TH. HOFFMANN developed Brentano's idea that the Philistine is unable to grasp the supernatural, contrasting those privileged to sense the fundamental truths of creation with the

undiscerning Philistines who have no insight into the secrets of Nature. Only poets and seers like the student Anselmus in the "Goldener Topf" and Peregrinus Tyss in "Meister Floh" can lift the veil and see the wonders that lie beyond. "Ich Hochbeglückter habe das Höchste erkannt---- wie Glaube und Liebe ist ewig die Erkenntnis". Philistines like the Konrektor Paulmann and the Registrar Heerbrand on the other hand look to reason for an explanation of every marvel and scoff at Anselmus, failing to recognise the remarkable powers with which Nature has endowed him. Only when under the influence of drink do they see anything beyond the ordinary outward appearance of things.

Any extraordinary natural phenomenon is repudiated by those not sufficiently gifted to understand it. Fairies for instance are considered by the Philistines to be enemies of Aufklärung, in the absence of a rational explanation for their existence. "Sie treiben ein gefährliches Gewerbe mit dem Wunderbaren und scheuen sich nicht unter dem Namen Poesie, ein heimliches Gift zu verbreiten, das die Leute ganz unfähig macht zum Dienste der Aufklärung".<sup>1</sup> Their habits are considered harmful to society and in order to counteract their evil influence it is thought advisable for them to knit stockings for the soldiers and so be of some use to the community!

Hoffmann was tormented by the Romantic idea of the tragic

<sup>1</sup>. Klein Zaches p. 14.

dualism of life, the eternal conflict between idealism and realism, art and everyday life, material necessities forcing the idealist into the world of reality. Hoffmann depicts this problem more especially in the souls of musicians, the story of the Kappellmeister Kreisler recording in many ways his own trials and tribulations. Kreisler, a stranger in the world, lives in a higher sphere and would devote his life entirely to art, were he not driven by force of circumstances to become musical director at a petty court. With bitter irony he declares: "Lasst den braven Komponisten Kappellmeister--- werden, den Dichter Hofpoet, den Maler Hofporträtisten, den Bildhauer Hofporträtmeissler, und Ihr habt bald keine unnütze Phantasten mehr im Lande, vielmehr lauter nützliche Bürger von guter Erziehung und milden Sitten". When compelled to put his art to practical use the artist must listen with forbearance to Philistines at court criticising Mozart and Beethoven and eulogising Rossini and Pucitta as the masters of grand opera.

"Ritter Gluck"<sup>1</sup> is another composer with a high conception of art and music, obliged to live in Berlin among unsympathetic Philistines. "Sie kritteln und kritteln und verfeinern alles zur feinsten Messlichkeit; wühlen alles durch um nur einen armseligen Gedanken zu finden; über dem Schwatzen von Kunst, von Kunstsinn und was weiss ich, können sie nicht zum Schaffen kommen, und wird ihnen mal so zu Mute, als wenn sie ein paar



Gedanken ans Tagelicht befördern müssten, so zeigt die furchtbare Kälte ihre weite Entfernung von der Sonne--- es ist lappländische Arbeit".

Hoffmann attacks contemporary society from all angles. The universal greed and materialism, superficiality, pedantry and vanity, time and again move the poet to scorn. The "Sandmann's" satire of people in general and Philistine women in particular is exceptionally cutting. A wax doll is introduced into a circle of so-called scholars, none of whom detects that it is not a human being. The doll is in fact considered an extremely desirable type of woman and much above the average, for she appeared to listen attentively and did not sew or knit.

Hoffmann's belief in the dualism of life is reflected in his ideas on love and marriage. With the musician Kreisler he differentiates between the "gute Leute, die schlechte oder gar keine Musikanten sind", and whose love ends in marriage and Philistinism, and the real artists for whom love is a divine fire, "das nur leuchtet und wärmt, ohne mit verderblichen Flammen zu vernichten". The beloved of the artist lives in his soul as a song, picture or poem to inspire him for ever. Hoffmann differs from the other Romantics in that he has no wish to attain a synthesis by making married love more poetical, but deliberately separates it from the artist's love. His own marriage was commonplace and prosaic enough but his art,

like Kreisler's, was inspired by an ideal called Julia whose song penetrated his very being. Many a Philistine woman suffers by contrast with an ideal figure like Julia. Candida in "Klein Zaches"<sup>1</sup> is petty, uneducated, unimaginative, uninteresting. She has indeed gone through the formality of reading the Classics but forgotten them again at once.. Nothing upsets her unvarying daily round unless perchance the rain prevents her taking her usual walk. Household duties monopolise both her and Christine in the "Artushof".<sup>2</sup> Christine by the way is so precise in the matter of home tasks that she would not forget to feed the canary and lock up the linen cupboard if her neighbour's house were burning down. She loves her fiancé only because he has promised to marry her, "denn was sollte sie in aller Welt anfangen, wenn sie niemals Frau würde"?

In the autobiography of the Cat Murr,<sup>3</sup> the musician Kreisler is contrasted with a cat who, like Tieck's "Gestiefelte Kater", combines human powers with feline shape and habits. Brentano had suggested that the more domesticated an animal became the more it tended to be tainted with Philistinism, and the spoilt pet Murr lives up to this idea, representing the human Philistine in a masked form. He acclaims himself as a great scholar and writer because he reads voraciously and never stirs from his master's study, too self occupied to go out in the world and mix with other cats, and well satisfied with the good living

1. 1820

2. 1817.

3. 1820

assured him at home. The adventures of love and courtship inconvenience him to such an extent that he decides matrimony alone will restore his peace of mind and allow him to return into his rut. When deserted by his wife he becomes more of a recluse than ever and leads a slothful existence on the mat, afraid to cross the threshold in case he should chance to meet his faithless spouse and again be tormented with the agony of love. Kater Murr has no connection with the world and the rest of humanity. "Ihr seid in der grössten Gefahr, in die ein tüchtiger, junger Kerl von Kater--- nur geraten kann, d.h. ein arger, abscheulicher Philister zu werden", his friend Muzius declares, for it is not devotion to learning that keeps him at home, but sheer laziness and lack of enterprise: "Glaubt mir, das verfluchte, bequeme Leben ist es, was Euch faul und träge macht". Had he to work for his living he would not be so indolent, for as Goethe said, comfort breeds Philistinism. He must go out into the world and see life: "All Euer einsames Studieren hilft Euch ganz und gar nichts und ist Euch vielmehr noch schädlich. Denn Ihr bleibt dennoch ein Philister, und es gibt auf der weiten Erde nichts Langweiligeres und Abgeschmackteres als einen gelehrten Philister". Like Brentano's philosophical Philistine, "dem alles zu lang wird", he has become so absorbed in abstract things and so uninterested in life that he has lost all touch with the world.

When Kater Murr professes ignorance of the expression Philistine his friend, protesting that he can never really understand what a Philistine is as long as he himself is one, outlines the general characteristics of the "Katzphilister", remarkably akin to his human brother! Selfish, vain, greedy, timid and cowardly, the Katzphilister always procures the best place for himself and never wearies of singing his own praises though quite uninterested in the affairs of others. "Überhaupt ist alles Tun und Treiben des Katzphilisters bei jeder Gelegenheit abhängig von tausend und tausend Rücksichten". If attacked in the street by a pug, he does not retaliate for fear of offending the court-dog whose protection and favour he is seeking, but waits till dark to get his revenge. His favourite spot is by the home fire-side for there he is safe from all danger.

The Katzphilister is opposed to the Katzbursch: "Sage ich Euch nun, dass der Katzbursch offen, ehrlich, uneigennützig, herzlich, stets bereit dem Freunde zu helfen, ist, dass er keine andere Rücksichten kennt, als die Ehre und redlicher Sinn gebieten, genug, dass der Katzbursch durchaus der Antipode des Katzphilisters ist, so werdet Ihr keinen Anstand nehmen, Euch zu erheben aus dem Philistertum, um ein ordentlicher, tüchtiger Katzbursch zu werden". Murr's suggestion that "pomadig" is the best definition of a Philistine proves to Muzius that he



has understood the essence of Philistinism and is therefore no longer a Philistine. "Ja, pomadiger Philister! das ist die verächtliche Kreatur, die sich auflegt gegen das edle Burschentum und die wir überall, wo wir sie finden, tothetzen möchten.--- Ihr habt mir Euer treues, biederes und edelmütiges Herz kundgetan, und so wird die eitle Lust der Welt Euch nicht verlocken zum schnöden Philistertum". Kater Murr resolves to mend his ways and is elected member of a club of Katzburschen whose motto is:

"Pfot in Pfot und Brust an Brust  
Soll uns nichts verdüstern.  
Katzbursch sein ist unsere Lust  
Trotzen Katzphilistern".

As Kreisler is the counterpart of Kater Murr, so Balthasar in "Klein Zaches" of the prosaic Fabian. The two students' discussion of the wonderful is reminiscent of Don Quixote's arguments with Sancho Panca, Fabian maintaining that all marvels are silly conjuring tricks: "Ich bin ein aufgeklärter Mensch und statuieren durchaus kein Wunder". To him it seems Philistine to rank solitary walks in the woods before student activities for he, in effect the real Philistine, cannot understand the charm of studying Nature: "Willst du wieder heraus in den Wald und wie ein melancholischer Philister einsam herumirren, während tüchtige Bursche sich wacker üben in der edlen Fechtkunst? ---- Lass doch ab von deinem närrischen, unheimlichen Treiben".

In this story another man whose devotion to scholarship has robbed him of all vitality and knowledge of life, so that he does not even know the modern use of the word Philistine which the students apply to him, expresses his annoyance at being taken for "einen von dem Volke, --- das vor vielen Tausend Jahren mittelst eines Eselkinnbackens erschlagen wurde".

The Philistinism of those whose outlook on life never varies, is denounced in the "Serapionsbrüder",<sup>4</sup> for to remain stationary is opposed to the Romantic idea of protean change. Four friends meeting by chance after many years apart are surprised to find how they have changed since their undergraduate days. Yet, as one of them observes, it is in the nature of things that men should change with the years. "Trabten wir wirklich in demselben Geleise fort nichts in der Welt hätte uns mehr als eingefleischte Philister kundgetan". To illustrate his point he tells the story of two students of Kant's philosophy whose argument was suddenly interrupted and who, on meeting again many years later, resumed their conversation at precisely the point where they had broken off, oblivious of all that had taken place in the meantime. "Diese Geschichte---- trägt für mich beinah etwas Schauerliches in sich. Ohne einiges Entsetzen kann ich diesen tiefen gespenstischen Philistrismus nicht anschauen---- Also wir wollen keine

Philister sein, wir wollen nicht darauf bestehen, jenen Faden an dem wir vor zwölf Jahren spannen, nun fortzuspinnen, wir wollen uns nicht daran stossen, dass wir andere Röcke tragen und andere Hüte, wir wollen andere sein als damals und doch wieder dieselben". They decide to meet at intervals although at first some objection is raised to regular gatherings for "auf diese Weise bricht dann alle Philisterei auf uns ein, wie sie nur in irgend einem Klubb grünen und blühen mag". Any definite arrangement spoils the spontaneity of meeting, making it perhaps an irksome duty. The formation of a club shows the Philistine's inherent desire to renounce the last atom of freedom left him in a world full of conventions. It is however argued that had they been doomed to become Philistines, they would assuredly have succumbed by now, so they may well assume the danger is past. "Ich denke die Zeit mit ihren wunderbarsten Ereignissen hat dafür gesorgt, dass wir, lag auch wirklich wie ich indessen gar nicht glauben und zugeben will, einige Anlage dazu in unserm Innern, keine Philister werden konnten. Ist es denn möglich, dass unsere Zusammenkünfte jemals in den Philistrismus eines Klubbs ausarten können"? Or again as it is jestingly remarked: "Sollte denn bei uns poetischen Gemüthern und gemüthlichen Poeten jemals eine Art Philistrismus einbrechen können? Einen gewissen Hang dazu tragen wir wohl in uns, streben wir nur wenigstens nach der sublimsten Sorte; ein kleiner Beigeschmack davon ist zuweilen nicht ganz übel".

Satirical allusions to the Philistine are to be found here and there in the works of various other authors of the time.

"Die Verhängnisvolle Gabel", Platen's skit on the fate tragedy, resumes Eichendorff's attack on the prattling, un-enthusiastic German public:

"Denn zu Hause ist dort die Philisternatur  
Und die dumpfige Stubengelahrtheit."

In Immermann's "Cardenio und Celinde" the student Breiten sprach condemns as a "Pechphilister" the Chancellor of the University on account of his Spartan treatment of undergraduates.

George Büchner's only Romantic comedy, "Leonce und Lena", mocks Kleinstaaterei in the traditional manner. None of these writers however goes into Philistinism in any detail.

The satire of the Philistines, among the younger Romantics is more highly subjective than that of the earlier writers, more a matter of instinctive feeling than of reason and judgment. The expression Philistine is used much more freely than before, there is longer and more detailed discussion; a whole play and treatise are devoted to the Philistine, not merely odd remarks and fragmentary gibes. The treatment is also more comprehensive for the whole life and outlook of the Philistine are subjected to the microscope.

The young Romantics practise their wit at the expense of



the Philistine who is regarded more than ever as a subject of mirth and their satire is not inspired by any desire to improve him for the benefit of mankind.

Several new aspects of Philistinism are brought to light. Brentano and Hoffmann stress the banality of the Philistine's taste in music and his incredulity as regards the supernatural and the wonders of Nature, subjects particularly dear to the heart of the Younger Romantics. Hoffmann exposes the Philistinism of those who ignore the Romantic law of protean change and remain static. With Faust he thinks: "Wie ich beharre, bin ich Knecht". Eichendorff declares war on those supporters of Romanticism who follow the letter of its law but not the spirit.

Yet in the long run the outlook of the later Romantics does not differ to any great extent from that of the earlier writers, for the Romantic nature is fundamentally unchanged. The works of Brentano, Eichendorff and Hoffmann are inspired by the Romantic philosophy of life and their satire is the negative aspect of their own love of art and personality, of genius and enthusiasm, of contrast, variety and freedom. Although they are more irrational and less critical, their attitude to the Philistine is at heart the same as ever. Conscious of their own vocation as poets, they despise the palpably petty who live by bread alone and have no knowledge of the higher spheres.

CHAPTER SEVEN.HEINE.

In its intolerance of mediocrity and contempt for utilitarianism, HEINE's satire is a legacy of Romanticism, but he attacks the Philistine more as a personal foe than as the enemy of poetry; although he also despises the unpoetical elements of Philistinism, art is not so sacred to him as to the Romantics, and he has not the same elevated idea of the mission of the poet. His judgement is swayed largely by personal feeling and he frequently denounces as Philistine anything he does not happen to like.

Romantic irony has seldom been used more effectively than in the sudden anticlimax, the "cold douche" to which Heine subjects his readers at the end of many of his poems, illustrating the poet's power to destroy the illusion he has himself created. He lets, as it were, a Philistine intrude into the atmosphere of poetry and intervene with some banal remark which brings writer and reader back to earth, out of the imaginary world into which the enthusiasm of the poet had led them. This intrusion of the Philistine into the sphere of poetry is also a characteristic feature of Heine's prose.

Heine created numerous individual Philistines, but he does not analyse their characters or explain their make-up. In traditional style, his Philistines consist chiefly of well-to-do

tradespeople who take themselves very seriously and can find no place for humour:

"Die Philister, die Beschränkten,  
Diese geistig eingeengten  
Darf man nie und nimmer necken.  
Aber weite, kluge Herzen  
Wissen stets in unseren Scherzen  
Lieb und Freundschaft zu entdecken."

In the "Traumbilder",<sup>2</sup> Heine voices the enmity of the poor student to the rich merchant when telling the sad story of the youth who loved the professor's daughter and sighed for her in vain, for

"Die Blume der Blumen ward endlich gepflückt  
Vom dürren Philister, dem reichen Wicht."

Heine repeatedly decries the Philistine's supercilious and conventional attitude to Nature, as for instance in the "Intermezzo":

"Philister im Sonntagsröcklein  
Spazieren durch Wald und Flur;  
Sie jauchzen, sie hüpfen wie Böcklein,  
Begrüssen die schöne Natur.

Betrachten mit blinzelnden Augen,  
Wie alles romantisch blüht;  
Mit langen Ohren saugen  
Sie ein der Spatzen Lied."

The Romantic has come to such a sorry pass that even Philistines take a delight in it.

There is little new in Heine's attack on the Bildungsphilister, the pseudo-philosophical, aesthetic and poetic Philistines. In the "Harzreise"<sup>3</sup> he jeers at the Philistines who, succumbing to environment on the Brocken, sign the visitors'

1. Werke III, 441. *Zur Holz! (hachlese)*

2. 1817-21. "Ich kam von meiner Herrin Haus."

3. 1826.

book in a poetic mood: "In dem Brockenbuche sieht man welche Greuel entstehen, wenn der grosse Philistertross --- sich vorgenommen hat, poetisch zu werden." However he denies that the Brocken itself is a Philistine, since it can be as Romantic as any poet: "Durch seinen Kahlkopf, den er zuweilen mit einer weissen Nebelkappe bedeckt, gibt er zwar einen Anstrich von Philiströsität, aber wie bei manchen anderen grossen Deutschen, geschieht es aus purer Ironie. Es ist sogar notorisch, dass der Brocken seine burschikosen, phantastischen Zeiten hat, z.B. die erste Mainacht. Dann wirft er seine Nebelkappe jubelnd in die Lüfte, und wird, ebenso gut wie wir übrigen, recht echt-deutsch, romantisch verrückt."

Philistine taste in music is touched upon when Heine refers to the popularity enjoyed by the songs of Albert Methfessel "im Kränzchen sanftmütiger Philisterei."<sup>1</sup>

In his "Reisebilder", Heine describes some of the peculiarities of Philistines on their travels. Perhaps the most pungent of such character sketches, which abound in his works, is that of the Berlin Philistine in the "Reise von München nach Genua".<sup>2</sup> Wholly unresponsive to the individual beauty of foreign cities, he will admit of no comparison between them and his own native town, but gushes about places he has never visited. His favourite topic is the weather: "Wenn irgend ein schwammiger Kommerzienrat oder dürrer Käsekrämer sich zu uns setzt, und ein allgemeines europaisches Gespräch mit den Worten anfängt: 'Es

1. Albert Methfessel. Oct. 1823.

2. 1828-29.



ist heute eine schöne Witterung'", great restraint is required to answer him politely, But it is worth while to avoid being rude to him, for you never can tell under what circumstances you may meet him again and he is just the man who from sheer spite would do you out of the choice morsels at table if he had the chance. He might even happen to be buried in the grave next to your own and refuse a helping hand on the day of the Resurrection: "dann bemerkst du plötzlich das wohlbekannte Philisterlächeln, und hörst die höhnische Stimme: 'Es ist heute eine schöne Witterung'."

The thought of the glories of Italy however sends even the most barren Philistine into an ecstasy, when a more subtle beauty would leave him cold. Heine will tarry no longer: "Ich will sobald als möglich das Land sehen, das den trockensten Philister so sehr in Ekstase bringen kann, dass er bei dessen Erwähnung plötzlich wie eine Wachtel schlägt --- und 'Tirili' sagt."

In many ways the "Harzreise" resembles Eichendorff's "Taugenichts" which appeared in the same year. Though Heine's tale is more realistic, the same Romantic atmosphere, the feeling of youth and spring permeates both works. The hero in each sets out in quest of beauty and turns his back on dull Philistines tied to settled professions and preoccupied with mundane cares. The poet flees from the work-a-day world into the arms of Nature, but even on this Romantic pilgrimage

frequently comes into contact with insensitive Philistines. Like the student Anselmus in the "Goldener Topf", Heine is ever being called back to earth by platitudes such as that of the young merchant profaning the exquisite beauty of the sunset, "Wie ist doch die Natur im Allgemeinen so schön!"

With all the arrogance of youth, the student Heine sums up the unimaginative inhabitants of Göttingen as "Studenten, Professoren, Philister und Vieh", four classes differing but little from each other. "Die Zahl der Göttinger Philister muss sehr gross sein, wie Sand, oder besser gesagt, wie Kot am Meer", he declares: "wahrlich, wenn ich sie des Morgens mit ihren schmutzigen Gesichtern und weissen Rechnungen vor den Pforten des akademischen Gerichtes aufgepflanzt sah, so mochte ich kaum begreifen, wie Gott nur so viel Lumpenpack erschaffen konnte." The atmosphere of the small town prevailed in Göttingen notwithstanding the presence of a University; indeed Professors and students rivalled the Bürger in their Philistinism. Heine was not happy at Göttingen; he found the University dull, the people pedantic and old-fashioned. The haughty Hanoverian squires among the undergraduates enjoyed special privileges denied to him, a bourgeois and Jew. Apart from these drawbacks, he had the misfortune to be sent down from the University on account of a duel and expelled from the Burschenschaft, experiences well calculated to destroy in him any enthusiasm for academic life. He had no illusions as regards Universities.

As he wrote ironically from Berlin in 1822:<sup>1</sup> "Gehen denn so viele Philister ins Kollegium? Still, still, das sind keine Philister. Der hohe Hut-- und der Überrock a l'Anglaise machen noch lange nicht den Philister." Yet in spite of his indictment of universities, he was bitterly disappointed when his claims to the university chair he so ardently coveted were overlooked.

Much of Heine's satire is of a political nature and he denounced as Philistine almost everything at variance with his own opinions. He belonged to the group of Young Germans whose aim was progress and the liberation of mankind from the remnants of feudalism and clericalism. Freedom was their religion. Concerned not with vague ideals, but with the real problems of the day, they had no patience with conservative devotion to outworn beliefs and traditions, and despised the archaic system of government still prevailing in the Germany of the early 19th century. These cosmopolitan and liberal reformers, disgusted with the stagnant Germany of the reaction, were out to build up a new society, an aristocracy of brains and genius, free from class distinctions. Heine's ideas in this respect were not uninfluenced by a sense of personal grievance, for he had experienced the disadvantages suffered by the Jews and the middle class. His hatred of class distinctions is revealed indirectly in his criticism of Kant, whom he considered a Philistine. Kant, he maintains, led a mechanical and prosaic

<sup>1</sup> Briefe aus Berlin I

existence, in marked contrast with the richness of his thought and inner life. But in order to distinguish himself from other philosophers who wrote for all classes, Kant composed his "Kritik der reinen Vernunft" in a "grauen, trockenen Packpapierstil", which would have only a limited appeal. "Er verlieh ihr daher eine steife, abstrakte Form, die alle Vertraulichkeit der niederen Geistesklassen kalt ablehnte. Er wollte sich von den damaligen Popularphilosophen, die nach bürgerlichster Deutlichkeit strebten, vornehm absondern, und er kleidete seine Gedanken in eine hofmännisch abgekältete Kanzleisprache. Hier zeigt sich ganz der Philister."<sup>1</sup>

The Saint-Simonists, whose cult was embraced by the Young Germans, sought to regenerate mankind by reviving the claims of matter and the senses. They called for the emancipation of the flesh and held that too much weight had been laid on the spiritual side of life since the introduction of Christianity. They were concerned with the earthly life rather than the heavenly, the present rather than the past. The Young Germans concentrated more particularly on the sensual side of the new religion, which offered to men of Heine's calibre a solution of the struggle between sensuality and spirituality, for no distinction was made as to the relative value of spiritual and material pleasures.

France, the birthplace of Saint-Simonism, was to Heine the symbol of the modern spirit of progress. In the French

<sup>1</sup> Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland. III, 1834.



Revolution he saw a movement for freedom not only in the State but in the whole social life. The July Revolution, bursting like a thunderbolt on the dull period of reaction in Germany, seemed to him the signal for the establishment of a new order of things in Europe. Turning his back on Germany, "the land of the Philistines", he crossed the Rhine to "the consecrated land of freedom", declaring: "Die Franzosen sind das auserlesene Volk der neuen Religion (der Freiheit), in ihrer Sprache sind die ersten Evangelien und Dogmen verzeichnet, Paris ist das neue Jerusalem, und der Rhein der Jordan, der das geweihte Land der Freiheit trennt von dem Lande der Philister."<sup>1</sup>

After he had spent some time in France, however, he perceived that she was not the chosen land he had imagined and that her ideal of freedom was not in reality achieved. Heine's scorn for those who cherish an idea of freedom but hesitate to put it into practice is illustrated in what he said of Ruge: "Ruge ist der Philister, welcher sich mal unparteiisch im Spiegel betrachtet und gestanden hat, dass der Apoll von Belvedere doch schöner sei. Er hat die Freiheit schon im Geiste, sie will ihm aber noch nicht in die Glieder."<sup>2</sup> Under the government of Louis Philippe, France was pervaded by a spirit of materialism and indifference, manifested in universal egoism and political corruption. The Bourgeoisie had usurped the place of the nobility and the cause of freedom had not advanced. Heine's attitude to France gradually changed. Disillusioned,

1. Englische Fragmente 1828-30. H. XIII. Die Befreiung.

2. Gedanken und Entfälle Werke X, 258. (Nachlass)

he wrote in "Deutschland ein Wintermärchen":<sup>1.</sup>

"Sie sind die alten Franzosen nicht mehr---

Sie philosophieren und sprechen jetzt  
Von Kant, von Fichte und Hegel,  
Sie rauchen Tabak, sie trinken Bier,  
Und manche schieben auch Kegel.

Sie werden Philister ganz wie wir,  
Und treiben es endlich noch ärger;  
Sie sind keine Voltairianer mehr,  
Sie werden Hengstenberger."

In a conversation with Eckermann, Goethe too had commented on the Philistinism of playing skittles: "Unser deutsches Kegelbahnvergnügen erscheint -- roh und ordinär und hat sehr viel vom Philister."<sup>2.</sup>

Heine's worship of freedom and genius led to a passionate admiration for Napoleon, to whom he felt personally indebted for the liberty granted to Jews in the Rhineland. His love for Napoleon largely accounts for his attack on Scott's "Life of Napoleon Bonaparte".<sup>3.</sup> He objected not so much to the literary failings of the book as to the fact that Scott was trying to exonerate the English government from blame for "the crime of St. Helena". "Die Engländer haben den Kaiser bloss ermordet aber Walter Scott hat ihn verkauft," for he wrote this biography to appease the demands of his clamouring creditors. Only Philistines could praise Scott now: "Lobt ihn, den braven Bürger! lobt ihn, ihr sämtliche Philister des ganzen Erdballs! lob ihn, du liebe Krämertugend, die alles aufopfert, um die Wechsel am Verfalltage einzulösen --- nur mir mutet nicht zu,

1. 1844. Kap. 2.

2. Eckermann 1st May 1825.

3. Englische Fragmente 1828-30.

dass auch ich ihn lobe".

Heine's attitude to Germany was at times somewhat carping; in fact he seems to suggest that everything German is necessarily Philistine. On his travels he rejoices in the absence of Philistinism, and the mere fact of being foreign rather than German enhances the value of the people he meets and lessens the chance of their being Philistine. Comparing Italy with Germany in the "Stadt Lucca"<sup>1</sup> he says: "Das ganze Land ist dort so gartenhaft und geschmückt wie bei uns die ländlichen Scenen, die auf dem Theater dargestellt werden;---. Nirgends Philistergesichter. Und giebt es hier auch Philister, so sind es doch italienische Orangenphilister, und keine plump deutschen Kartoffelphilister. Pittoresk und idealisch wie das Land sind auch die Leute". No foreign Philistinism is so loathsome to him as the German species. Every Italian has an individual expression and a live personality. "Dagegen bei uns zu Lande lauter Menschen mit allgemeinen, gleichförmigen Physiognomien; wenn ihrer zwölf beisammen sind, bilden sie ein Dutzend, und wenn einer sie dann angreift, rufen sie die Polizei".

In like manner Heine draws an unfavourable comparison between Germany and Poland.<sup>2</sup> Although the Jews constitute the Polish middle class and carry on all the trades, they are not so Philistine as the German merchants. It is a mistake to imagine that Poland has no tiers état, "weil dieselben vom Ideal gemüthlicher Bürgerlichkeit, wie dasselbe in einem Nürnberger

<sup>1</sup> 1828-29

<sup>2</sup> über Polen 1822.

Frauentaschenbuche, unter dem Bilde reichsstädtischer Philistrität, so niedlich und sonntäglich schmuck dargestellt wird, äusserlich noch sehr entfernt sind". Goethe too, it will be remembered, had spoken in particular of the Nürnberg Philistines, when describing the good qualities of Gröbler. Heine can see nothing meritorious about the virtues of the German Bürger.

Heine's function in the war of liberation of mankind was to free the world from the meshes of Philistinism. As Matthew Arnold said, Goethe had been content with a more gradual process of liberation from the old order of things, but Heine was bent on open war and passed the greater part of his life "in one fierce battle-- a life and death battle with Philistinism."<sup>1</sup> One cannot fail to observe the resemblance between Heine himself and "little Samson", the Jewish friend of Herr von Schnabelewopski, who defends his ideal unto the end and dies repeating Samson's words: "Es sterbe meine Seele mit den Philistern."<sup>2</sup> Who then can fathom the despair that underlies the words of Heine's last poem, "Der Scheidende",<sup>3</sup> in which he is forced to admit that a living Philistine is after all happier than a dead hero:

"Der kleinste, lebendige Philister  
Zu Stukkert am Neckar,  
Viel glücklicher ist er,  
Als ich, der Pelide, der tote Held,  
Der Schattenfürst in der Unterwelt".

1. Essays op. cit. p 106

2. Memoiren des Herrn von Schnabelewopski. Werke II, 378 ff.

3. II, 437. Aus der Matriatzengungst. (hachlere)



## CHAPTER EIGHT.

### CONCLUSION.

In the course of our study we have seen the use of the word Philistine and the satire directed against the type gradually gain ground during the sixty years of Goethe's activity in the literary world. Let us now draw together the threads of our effort to establish the central conception of the Philistine.

The critical attitude to Aufklärung, from which the attack on the Philistine resulted, began with Hamann whose ideas on genius and originality and contempt for the overrational Aufklärer inspired Storm and Stress. The circle that gathered round Herder and Goethe at Strassburg continued Hamann's work and to it do we owe the first uses of the term Philistine in the moral and intellectual sense.

Goethe's Werther introduced the word into German literature and resumed the satire originated by Hamann, the underlying note being scorn for contemporary middle class society, the smug, unimaginative, materialistic Philistines who have no insight, no depth of passion, no love of Nature, and who do not see the relativity of their own circumstances, but regard them as final. Goethe continued the satire in Faust and his other youthful works, and frequently referred to the

Philistine in his correspondence.

Schiller attacked the universal lack of vigour and brotherly love, the conventionalism and pharasaical attitude of the Philistine to religion. Klinger, like Lenz, used the term as descriptive of middle-class existence, contrasted with a life of adventure. The love of freedom leads the Stürmer and Dränger to shun bourgeois life and domesticity and they have nothing but contempt for the mechanical outlook of men with official positions. For Storm and Stress in general, the Philistine is one for whom freedom, Nature, originality and enthusiasm have no appeal, and the more sensitive among the young writers see in the Philistine the enemy of poetry and genius. Goethe and Lenz, who suffered most from the public's lack of understanding, introduced into their works the satire of the "Bildungsphilister", who prides himself on his culture but has no real appreciation of art.

By 1780 Philistine had become a current expression in the spoken language and although it was as yet only sparsely used in literature, the satire had already found a firm footing in the works of Storm and Stress.

The Classics abandoned the titanic outlook of their youth and called for harmony and restraint. Their ideal of the good citizen who finds happiness in unselfish devotion to duty seemed to the Romantics somewhat Philistine, but though the older Goethe and Schiller praised the bourgeois virtues, their

war on the Philistines never abated. The Xenien and Votivtafeln are directed openly against the Philistine as the common foe and satirise in particular the literary variety of the species, whose lack of imagination and insight is responsible for the mediocrity of German culture. The authors again denounce the Philistine's materialistic attitude to Nature. The frequent mention of the term Philistine finally establishes the literary use of the word and henceforth references to it become much more common.

Goethe and Schiller indicate that Philistinism is most widespread amongst well-to-do tradespeople with their feeling of security and self-importance and lack of a sense of humour, and Goethe deplores the fate of poets among such Philistines who hinder the course of genius. Schiller and he accuse the Philistine of obstinacy and imperviousness to new ideas, hypocrisy, superficiality and idle curiosity. In times of anxiety, Philistines give way to excessive fear and hope when they could better serve their purpose by fulfilling their ordinary duties. The want of penetration shows itself also in the case of scientists for whom practical analysis does duty for a knowledge of Nature. Philistines have a false standard of beauty and distort Nature so as to make it fit in with the dictates of their absurd conventions.

"Der Philister ist der wesentlich unromantische Mensch" says Thomas Mann.<sup>1</sup> For the Romantics the Philistine is one who,

<sup>1</sup> Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen p. 105

content with material existence, has no yearning for the infinite, no love of contrast and variety, of great personalities, of art, enthusiasm and culture. As poetry is the great passion of the Romantics, they stress more than ever the unpoetic nature of the Philistine, and similarly their idealisation of love leads to their contempt for Philistine domestic happiness.

Tieck is concerned in the main with Aufklärung and Philistinism in literature and the theatre. Novalis attacks the Philistine for being void of higher thought, selfish, superficial and materialistic. Fr. Schlegel raises the banner of Romantic love while Jean Paul, half Romantic, half Bürger, mocks the pettiness of the small town dweller and the domesticity of the uneducated womenfolk.

Brentano shows the Philistines as the enemy of the poet and the idea, of genius and enthusiasm. He proclaims the negative as the source of Philistinism and continues the attack on Philistine taste in the fine arts generally, not merely in literature and the theatre but likewise in music, architecture and philosophy. With his sister Bettina, he extols Goethe as the perfect Anti-Philistine. Brentano also touches upon the inability of the Philistine to envisage wonders, a theme which forms one of the main topics of Hoffmann. The Philistine ignores the power of the supernatural, seeks a prosaic proof of every mystery and repudiates everything that is unresponsive



to common sense. Hoffmann's satire is at times a kind of fable, directed against humans but in a masked form. He lays bare the misery Philistinism causes the musician and continues the strictures of the unimaginative housewife. His outlook on love differs somewhat from that of the other Romantics for he does not try to make married love more poetical but deliberately separates it from the inspiring love of the artist. Lack of enthusiasm is to him also one of the marks of the Philistine and he maintains that those who ignore the Romantic law of protean change and remain all their lives unaltered are likewise of the despised category. Eichendorff extends the satire to the quasi Romantics who do not grasp the essence of Romanticism, and continues the attack on pseudo-culture and the superficial attitude to life, Nature, art and so forth. With Hoffmann, he ridicules the "aesthetic teaparty" fashion which fosters the prattling of art by the inappreciative.

Much of Heine's satire is inherited from Romanticism. He not only mocks the Philistine attitude to the higher things of life in the traditional way but also reveals the idiosyncrasies of Philistines on their travels and points out that Universities are not necessarily the strongholds of Anti-Philistinism for which they had always been taken. As a representative of Young Germany and Saint-Simonism he brings the satire into the political field, rejecting class distinctions and insisting on the Philistinism of those who do not value freedom, genius and

progress. His hypercritical attitude to Germany goes so far at times as to convey the impression that everything German savours of the Philistine, but this like much of his criticism, arises from prejudice and purely personal reasons. This application of the term coincides with what Tieck wrote in 1835:<sup>1</sup> "Philisterei ist seit 1774 noch mehr als Bezeichnung ruhiger, verständiger und brauchbarer Menschen beliebt worden, die eben kein heisses Herz, keinen Enthusiasmus haben--- Die Worte Philister und Philisterei sind uns geblieben, ja unserer Sprache notwendig und unentbehrlich geworden". But, he adds, the meaning Goethe intended to convey when he first used the expression has been so extended in the course of the past fifty years and the term is now so commonly used by the disciple of one school of thought to denote those whose opinions are at variance with his own, "dass altdeutsche, oder liberale, politische, religiöse Alberts, gegen welche der Albert von 1774 wohl genial-- zu nennen ist, im Jahre 1834 den damaligen Werther einen kleinen, sentimental Philister nennen würden, der sich weder für Staat, Menschheit, Freiheit noch Natur begeistern könne, sondern der nur einer armseligen Liebe lebt und stirbt".

Although much of Heine's work is characteristic of the Romantics, he himself cannot be reckoned of their number since he did not believe in the theory which he utilised as an aid to his art. As Romanticism comes to an end with Heine, we may fittingly conclude here our study of the satire of the

<sup>1</sup> Das alte Buch. Ges. Novellen 1853, VIII 186.

## Philistine.

The negative aspect of the philosophy of idealism which united the three generations of poets of the age of Goethe was contempt for the Philistine, a phase of the eternal conflict between the spiritual and the material, between Künstler and Bürger. Storm and Stress marked the beginning of the critical attitude to Aufklärung, which, adopted also by the older Goethe and Schiller, reached its climax with the Romantics. The real antithesis of German Romanticism is not Classicism but Aufklärung, for Classics and Romantics were both essentially idealistic. Their criticism of society was, as we have seen, influenced by the peculiarly restricting circumstances of 18th century Germany, the result of particularism, against whose bondage the artistic inevitably rebelled.

The Philistine is the opposite of all the Romantics wish to be. The keynote of Romanticism is a longing for the infinite. Love and art are means of approaching the eternal; the wonderful and the mysterious are expressions of divinity. The Philistine is insensitive and superficial in his attitude to art and asks no more of love than ordinary domestic happiness. He is blind to wonders and beauty, has no thought beyond material existence and finds contentment in the humdrum daily round. The Romantics love variety and experience; the Philistine has no enthusiasm and no wish for adventure. To the Romantics the will of man is all-powerful; the Philistine has

no personality and no desire to develop his mind. He is void of idealism and the problems of the poet are beyond his comprehension. In the midst of life he is in death since he has not a single original thought to enrich the world.

In conclusion let us recall Voss' definition of the Philistine:<sup>1</sup> "Keinen Stand versteht man darunter, sondern den Linkischen, den Geistlosen in jedem Stand und Geschäft, der sich durch törichte Anmassung über seine Sphäre erhebt. Wer einen Handwerker Philister schelten wollte, weil ihm Wissen und Gelehrsamkeit abgeht, würde dadurch selbst zum Philister--- Einen prächtigen Philister zeichnet Goethe im Wilhelm Meister mit wenigen Worten, einen Jüngling, der mit dem Buch in die Hand die Natur bewundert, der die Schauspielergesellschaft auf das Rieseln der Quelle, das Sauseln des Windes aufmerksam macht, und dem Philine einen Kuckuck zuruft".

<sup>1</sup> Am Wechsers. Briefe II, 101. Nov. 1821.



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